A Descriptive Model of the Process of Violent Offending

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ABSTRACT

Violence has become one of the most pressing social problems faced by society in the 1990's. In New Zealand, conviction rates for violent offenses are up from 7627 in 1985 to 16003 in 1994 and all indications are that this rate is steadily increasing. Maori offenders are over represented in New Zealand prisons, both in general, but also with regard to violent offending in particular. Intervention and prevention strategies aimed at reducing violent offending are continually being developed, and in New Zealand the Department of Corrections has taken a step in this direction by opening a specialised unit specifically designed to address treatment of violent offenders. However, while research in the theoretical development of aggression, anger, and violent behaviour has significantly advanced and provided many important findings in recent years, there is as yet no model of the *process* of violent offending available to which these findings may be applied. This study, using the qualitative framework of grounded theory, developed a preliminary descriptive model of the process of offending for convicted grievous bodily harm and assault, aggravated robbery, murder, and manslaughter offenders. The study also compared offence processes for Maori and Pakeha offenders. The model begins to clarify the predominant issues involved in violent offending and provides direction for further research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Both internationally and domestically, violent crime is a public health problem of the highest magnitude. In recent years substantial research has yielded important findings about violence (American Psychological Association (APA), 1996), including: a) aggressive, anti-social behaviour in early childhood often foretells a life of violence; b) certain physiological characteristics may predispose a child to be more or less aggressive, but these predispositions are moderated greatly by the environment in which the child grows up; c) attitudes, beliefs and values about violence do noticeably influence violent behaviour; d) deprived environments, where poverty, frustration, and hopelessness are endemic, lead to a greater risk of later involvement in violence; e) most women, children and elderly persons encounter violence in the home more than in any other location and the perpetrator of that violence is likely to be another family member; f) children in abusive families, who witness everyday violence in homes and neighbourhoods and absorb media representations of violence daily, are at a great risk for becoming violent themselves; g) children can be taught to be non-violent just as they can be taught to be violent; h) children raised without adequate supervision and appropriate discipline are more likely to behave aggressively and act violently as adults

Clearly, social scientists are working consistently and persistently toward identification and clarification of critical aspects related to the causes and developmental pathways of violent and aggressive behaviour, and these advances in our knowledge have already provided the foundation for many treatment and intervention programmes that attempt to reduce violence.

A social reality however, is that the incidence and prevalence of violent crime and the number of violent offenders both in and out of our prisons continues to grow. In New Zealand the number of convictions for violent offences rose from 7627 to 16003 between 1985 and 1994, with recent years particularly marked by increases in

violent crime (Department of Corrections, 1996, June). Once incarcerated, convicted violent offenders have historically received little or piecemeal treatment addressing their offending, mostly limited to anger-management and intervention in secondary psychopathology such as substance abuse. A 1990 study by the Department of Correction revealed a 75% recidivism rate for violent offenders in New Zealand with regard to reoffending in general, and 50% for reoffending violently. Clearly, this situation is unacceptable and society is faced with an increasing need to actively intervene with regard to incarcerated violent offenders, in addition to and in conjunction with efforts that aim to develop a better understanding of violence with preventative goals in mind.

Encouragingly, a new and groundbreaking initiative to this end has been instigated by the Department of Corrections, which opened the Violence Prevention Unit at Rimataka Prison early in 1998. This unit provides a 30-bed inpatient treatment facility for violent offenders, and aims to address multiple aspects of offending, including relapse prevention, empathy training, relaxation training, communication and problem solving skills training, anger-management and parenting skills, using the social learning paradigm.

Notably, however, the therapy programme employed at the unit is currently, at least in part, based on analogous models of pathways of offending extracted from the sex offending literature. While there may well be merit in applying such analogies of sex offending pathways to intervention planning and delivery for violent offenders, it would seem that there may be equal, if not more, support for research that attempts to identify and clarify processes of offending specifically for violent offenders. A process model of violent offending would begin to generate information that could inform intervention methodology, ensuring that treatment and prevention methods are based on accurate and pertinent information.

Process models are, at least to the author's knowledge, lacking in the violence literature. Rather, we presently have available a host of both single factor and multi

factor theories that propose various causal mechanisms for violent behaviour, but none are able to explain the *process* by which this occurs. The process of violent offending needs be described and documented so that existing theories may be applied to this offence chain in an attempt to account for its structure.

The application of a meta-theoretical framework to the sex offending literature by Ward and Hudson (1996b cited in Polaschek, Ward, McCormack & Hudson, 1998) clarified and structured the available research in a way that both pointed to its deficiencies and promoted future directions in research. A feature of this meta-theoretical approach is its ability to highlight saturation, or lack of saturation, of various levels of theoretical formulation.

Briefly, the meta-theoretical approach used by Ward and Hudson classifies theories and theoretical frameworks into three distinct levels by virtue of the focus of the particular theory at hand. Thus Level II theories are single-factor, narrowly focused theories, Level I theories are multifactorial explanations (usually loosely binding several single factors into one construct) and Level III theories are descriptive models of the actual offense process.

The critical point with regard to Level III theories is that it is these theoretical approaches and frameworks that identify, or highlight, those factors that Level I and Level II theories must endeavor to explain. In other words, process models serve to describe the 'how' of some type of offending (whether this is initial offending or reoffending), and single-factor and/or multifactorial theoretical explanations serve to provide the 'why'.

Applied to the violence literature, the meta-theoretical framework described above identifies several Level II theories, such as Berkowitz's (1974) behaviourally based drive theory, and Dollard's (1939) frustration theory; and various Level I theories such as Novaco's (1978) 'anger-arousal' theory, Box's (1983) sociologically based theory, Weiner's (1982) attribution theory, Berkowitz's Neo-Associationist model

and various social cognitive theories such as those by Huesmann and Eron (1977, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1987, 1988). More importantly however, it identifies a dire lack of Level III theories, supporting the observation that research in this area is warranted.

The identification of this need in the violence literature formed the impetus for the present study. In order to place the above observations within the context of violence literature in general, the following sections will: provide an overview of the definitions of violence and violent offending utilised in this paper; present a brief overview of the extent of the problem; outline the most accepted and most recent theoretical works currently available in this area; provide an overview of process models, specifically as applied in the sex offending literature; and finally, outline the purpose of the present research.

1.1. DEFINITIONS

Without adequate and practically functional definitions, any research, and thus subsequent knowledge and advancement, is hampered. Over the past 10 years, research in the violence area has increasingly emphasised individual differences in aggression and this shift has led to the recognition that aggressive behaviours often occur in a context of other antisocial behaviours, including non-compliance with adults, delinquency, substance abuse, cheating, early and risky sexual activity, and vandalism (Coie & Dodge, 1998). Although definitions of aggression and antisocial activity usually have considerable overlap, there are important differences among them.

Coie and Dodge (1998) suggest that definitions may be divided into those based on topography, on antecedents, or on outcome and Hartup and deWit (1974) concluded that definitions have relied on one or more of four aspects of the phenomenon: (a) topographical qualities of a behaviour, (b) antecedents of a behaviour, (c) effects of a behaviour, and (d) the social judgement of a behaviour made by an observer.

Topographical Definition

For human aggression, these types of definitions have been largely unsuccessful. The range of aggression is much greater, the elicitation conditions are less restricted and the effects of the experience more pervasive than in the various non-human species, where topographical definitions for aggression have been successfully employed.

Definition Based on Antecedent Conditions

A major definitional approach has been to rely on the antecedent conditions preceding an act of aggression to declare a behaviour as aggressive. The antecedent condition, the intent to harm, is placed squarely at the core of the construct of aggression. Although this definition has guided an enormous body of research, it has two major problems. First, intentionality is not a directly observable feature of a behaviour; it must be inferred. The reliability and validity of this judgement is often a problem. Second, a focus on antecedents of aggression ignores that subclass of aggression that is outcome focused (e.g., acquisition of a peer's toy or a store's money).

Outcome Based Definitions

Also known as the 'effects approach', this method defines aggression as behaviour that results in injury of another individual (Parke & Slaby, 1983). While this definition avoids the pitfalls previously described, it leads to three new problems.

First, injury may result unintentionally from the behaviour of others. Second, this approach excludes behaviours that appear obviously aggressive but do not lead to injury, such as the gunfire of a sniper that happens to miss its target. Likewise, quantifying degrees of aggressiveness based on degrees of injury could be misleading, as in the case of a gunshot victim who survives or dies as a function of the skill level of an emergency room surgeon. Finally, a focus on outcomes leads to

a theory of aggression that is more instrumental than emotional, thus de-emphasising a major part of the phenomenon.

The Social Judgement Approach to Defining Aggression

Walters and Parke (1964) have suggested that aggression is a culturally determined label applied to a behaviour following the social judgement of an observer. Intention and other antecedent conditions, as well as injury and other outcomes, may be part of a cultural definition. From this viewpoint, definitions of aggression vary across cultures.

A Multifactor Framework

Brain (1994) suggests that four conditions define aggression as a heterogeneous category rather than an entity. Aggressive acts must have the potential for harm or damage; aggression must be intentional; aggression, to most biologists, involves arousal; and finally, the act must be aversive to the victim.

Rather than provide precise boundaries to the concept, Brain's criteria provide a multifactor framework. This framework, taken together with Parke and Slaby's (1983) definition of aggression as behaviour that is aimed at harming or injuring another person, serves as the basic conception of aggression for this paper. Regarding the distinction between aggression and violence, this paper concurs with Hollin (1993) in suggesting that aggression is the intention to hurt or gain physical advantage over others, not necessarily invoking physical injury; and violence involves the use of strong physical force, not necessarily propelled by an aggressive impulse.

With regard to violent offending, this paper adopts the categories of violent offending used by Spier (1995). In this work he noted that violent offences involve either a direct act of violence against a person, or the threat of such an act. Thus, violent offences include: murder, manslaughter, attempted murder,

kidnapping/abduction, rape, unlawful sexual connection, attempted sexual violation, indecent assault, aggravated burglary, aggravated robbery, robbery, injuring or wounding, aggravated assault, male assaults female, other assault, threatening to kill or do grievous bodily harm, and other violence.

The general focus of this paper is restricted to GBH/assault, aggravated robbery, murder and manslaughter. Sexual offences and kidnapping/abduction are quite specific domains in and of themselves, and fall outside the scope of this work. These areas are therefore not extensively covered in the theoretical overview of the violence literature.

1.2. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL INFORMATION

In recent years, a marked increase in both the incidence of violence offences, and the seriousness of these offences has been noted in New Zealand.

The figures in the tables below are drawn from Spier (1995) and pertain specifically to New Zealand. For most of the statistics presented below, sexual offences were not able to be separated out from other violent offences. It is obvious from the figures presented in Table 1. and Table 2. below that the problem of violent offending is on the increase in New Zealand.

Recognition of the high level of demand for programmes that provide intervention for convicted violent offenders is at odds with the parallel observation that resources are very limited (Department of Corrections, 1996, June).

Table 1. Convictions for violent offences in New Zealand for 1985-1994.

The number of convictions for violent offences rose from 7627 (7% of all convictions) in 1985 to 16003 (12% of all convictions) in 1994, an overall increase of 110%.
This compared with a 21% increase in total convictions for the same period.
The total number of convictions for non-sexual assaults of various types has nearly doubled since 1985.
Much of this increase has occurred in the category 'male assaults female'.
The majority of these assaults are domestic-related and the increase in convictions partly reflects a change in police practice towards arrest and prosecution of the offender in domestic incidents.
92% of the convictions for a violent offence in 1994 involved a male offender; 8% involved a female offender.
Maori offenders accounted for 43% of convictions for a violent offence in 1994- European offenders for 41% and Pacific Islands peoples for 14%.
The percentage of violent offence cases resulting in a custodial sentence in 1985 was 21.6%. This rose to 27.9% in 1990 then dropped to 20.1 % in 1994.
The average length of custodial sentence given to violent offenders rose from 13.8 months to 23.9 months during the same period.

Further, the 1993 Census of Prison Inmates (in Spier, 1995) shows that:

Table 2. New Zealand 1993 Census of Prison Inmates conviction figures.

In 1993, violence was the major offence leading to the imprisonment of 61% of male offenders and 44% of female offenders.
The most common violent offences for male inmates were aggravated robbery (22% of violent offenders and 13% of male inmates), rape (19% of violent offenders and 11 % of all male inmates) and unlawful sexual connection (12% of violent offenders and 7% of all male inmates).
The most common violent offences for female inmates were murder (25% of violent offenders and 11 % of all female inmates) and aggravated robbery (21 % of violent offenders and 9% of all female inmates).
In 1993, 15% of both male and female inmates were listed as having some gang affiliation. Male gang members were more likely than male inmates with no gang affiliation to have a major offence involving violence. The figures were 70% and 60% respectively.
The proportion of inmates convicted of violent offences has steadily increased. In 1987, 44% of male inmates and 32% of female inmates were violent offenders. By 1993, the proportions had increased to 61% and 44% respectively.

Clearly, targeted intervention programmes, based on sound research pertinent to New Zealand violent offenders, are required. Limited available funding further underscores the need for resources to be wisely directed to relevant and effective programmes.

1.3. OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT LITERATURE

Investigation of violence has focused on three areas; the act itself, the perpetrator, and the environmental context in which it occurs. Violence is best seen as an interaction between the situation and the person, but psychological research in this area has primarily, at least historically, restricted its focus to the 'person' side of this interaction. More recent work has attempted to address this issue, and as a result, more unified, multi factor theories are emerging.

Theorising About Violence – Developments During The Last 60 Years

The first theoretical account of the etiology of aggression was the work by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears (1939 cited in Huesmann, 1994). Up to this time, aggression had mostly been considered instinctual in nature, and as inherent in humans as it was in other species. In opposition to this, Dollard and colleagues proposed that learning had some part to play in human aggression, and set out to test the hypothesis that frustration leads to aggression.

Due to the inclusion of testable variables proposed to be causative in the Dollard et al collaboration, much scientific scrutiny of the theory followed. As literature began to emerge, it became obvious that the theory as it stood did not adequately explain all aggression. The new research that was emerging pointed at an emphasis on external environmental cues as elicitors of aggression, rather than placing the impetus for aggression on inherent or drive factors. Among this new wave of researchers in the aggression area were Bandura (1973 cited in Huesmann, 1994) and Eron (1961 cited in Huesmann, 1994). Bandura proposed that aggressive behaviour is learned and maintained through environmental experiences, and Eron suggested that aggressive behaviours are vicariously learned through training from socialising agents. This type of theorising represented the Social learning Theory approach to aggression.

By the late 1970's and early 1980's, researchers were again redefining their approach to aggression. The acknowledgement that an individual's perception, or interpretation, of events such as punishment for aggressive behaviour might prove important moved the focus of aggression research into a new domain, that of Social Cognitive Theory. A feature of this approach is its emphasis on aggression as a problem solving and social communication mechanism, and its contention, like that of social learning theory, that aggression is a learned behaviour, and can therefore be unlearned These features place the development of destructive behaviour in a much more positive light than did theories advocating aggression as an innate, instinctual phenomenon, to all intents and purposes outside the actor's control.

A more in-depth description of the various models of aggression and violent behaviour is presented in sections 1.3.6. and 1.3.7. The meta-theoretical approach described previously was applied to the available literature, and theories are presented in accordance with this approach. Thus, following a description of subtypes of violence and aggression, an overview of development of aggression across the lifespan, a presentation of the major environmental antecedents to aggressive behaviour and a brief look at aggression in adulthood, Level I and Level II theories are reviewed.

Defining Subtypes of Aggression

Aggression may be subdivided according to different antecedents and different intentions or goals.

ANTECEDENT DISTINCTIONS

Moyer (1976) described differences in the form and function of aggression that are related to hunger, crowding, self-defence, and other antecedent conditions. Other antecedent conditions might include provocation, interpersonal loss, social rejection, and authority directives (Dodge, McClaskey, & Feldman, 1985).

OUTCOME DISTINCTIONS

Other subclassifications have been made among the various outcomes or goals of aggression. Coie, Dodge, Terry, and Wright (1991) distinguished two subtypes of outcome-oriented aggression, *bullying* and *instrumental* aggression. Bullying is behaviour directed toward interpersonal dominance of another person, whereas instrumental aggression is coercive behaviour directed toward a noninterpersonal goal such as object possession.

THEORETICAL SUBCLASSIFICATION

The two different approaches to defining aggression, one based on antecedents and the other on outcomes, suggests a theoretically based subclassification.

- *Reactive –Proactive*

Aggression that appears to be a response to antecedent conditions such as goal blocking and provocation, and responses that are primarily interpersonal and hostile in nature can be considered *reactive;* in contrast, aggression that occurs in anticipation of self-serving outcomes can be called *proactive.* Thus, it may be possible to characterise persons as primarily reactively aggressive and others as primarily proactively aggressive.

- *Hostile-Instrumental and Affective-Instrumental*

Similar subclassifications to those described above have referred to hostile versus instrumental aggression (Hartup, 1974 cited in Coie & Dodge, 1998) and affective versus instrumental aggression (Lorenz, 1966 cited in Coie & Dodge, 1998).

- *Aggression as Social Communication*

Tedeschi & Felson (1994) suggest that human aggressive behaviour, because of its many adaptive features, has evolved to be part of a broader social communication system. As such, they propose that aggression must be interpreted as a social event, and that it has meaningful subtypes and multiple topographies, antecedents and functions.

Development of Aggression Across the Life Span

Aggressive behaviour is a universal characteristic of the human species. Direct observations of rates of conflict indicate linear decreases from the age of 12 months to 30 months (Holmberg, 1977; Maudry & Nekula, 1939 cited in Coie & Dodge, 1998). In contrast, some types of physical aggression (e.g., stamping and hitting) increase across this period and only later decline (Goodenough, 1931 cited in Coie & Dodge, 1998)

Still a different pattern is evidenced in verbal acts of aggression, which sharply increase from 24 months to 48 months, to coincide with language development (Jersild & Markey, 1935 cited in Coie & Dodge, 1998), but then stabilise. Physical fighting is a common form of male aggression in the prepubescent years. Finally, criminal homicides present a different developmental function altogether, with peaks at ages 18 to 20 years (Fingerhut & Kleinman, 1990 cited in Coie & Dodge, 1998).

Some of these discrepancies occur because the construct of antisocial behaviour itself changes across development. Grabbing objects, telling on others, and homicide are all valid measures of aggression, but developmental norms and base rates render their validity different at different ages.

Farrington (1993) suggests that different measures at different ages (e.g., fighting at age_8, vandalism at age 12, and homicide at age 18) may be indicators of the same underlying antisocial construct or may indicate developmental sequences across different but correlated constructs.

Aggression in Adulthood

Most self-report studies suggest that the overall rate of aggressive behaviour begins to decline between the ages of 18 and 25 years. Virtually no new cases of antisocial behaviour begin in adulthood.

The majority of the decline is likely to be attributable to the decrease in criminal of behaviour by those who were infrequent offenders in adolescence. High frequency offenders continue their offending at high rates (when not in prison) until about age 40, and then begin their decline. The high frequency offenders are often diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder and almost always begin exhibiting criminal behaviour early in life, continuing this behaviour through early adulthood. Elliott (1994), concluded, "Once involved in a lifestyle that includes serious forms of violence, theft, and substance use, persons from disadvantaged families and neighbourhoods find it very difficult to escape. They have fewer opportunities for conventional adult roles, and they are more deeply embedded in and dependent upon the gangs and the illicit economy that flourish in their neighbourhoods.... Poverty is related less to the onset of violence than to the continuity of violence, once initiated" (p. 19).

The evidence suggests that those persons who can establish stable work and family life careers, regardless of ethnicity, tend to end their involvement in criminal violence (Rutter, 1989).

Major Environmental Antecedents of Aggressive Behaviour

A review of the literature indicates that a variety of environmental risk factors play a role in the development of aggressive behaviour.

Ecological Conditions

Controlling for other community variables, poverty within the family increases the probability not only of adult crime, but also of peer-directed aggressive behaviour by children and adolescents. McLoyd (1990 cited in Coie & Dodge, 1998) suggests that poverty increases parental psychological distress and impairs their social support systems, thus diminishing their parental effectiveness and increasing their coerciveness toward their children.

Harsh discipline, low supervision, and poor parent-child attachment are influenced by poverty, and they in turn influence juvenile delinquency (Sampson & Laub, 1994). Parental divorce, parental conflict, being born to a teenager, being raised in a large family, and being born to a single parent, have all been shown to influence aggression, especially if they happen early in child's life (Coie & Dodge, 1998) . It is likely that both genetic components and poor parenting skills contribute to these findings.

By school age, conditions of environment and neighbourhood begin to have an effect, independently of parenting. Classroom environments are likely to exude considerable impact at this age, for example exposure to aggressive children, or, conversely a good academic atmosphere, provide variables that may reinforce both aggressive and non aggressive tendencies (Werthamer-Larsson, Kellam & Wheeler, 1991). A related issue, that of truancy and expulsion/suspension from school, has been shown to have negative effects on aggressive behaviour in a variety of ways, unsupervised interaction with deviant peers is one of the most easily apparent ones (Coie & Dodge, 1998) .

Additionally, onset of unemployment, gang membership, drug market involvement, arrest and subsequent stigmatisation as a criminal, and abnormally high temperatures have all been identified as aggresogenic conditions (e.g., Thornberry, 1987; Anderson, 1990).

The above described factors do not tend to occur in isolation, but influence each other in reciprocal ways. Berkowitz (1993), in his cognitive-neoassocianist approach, suggests that these types of conditions affect aggression by inducing negative affect (see 1.3.6. Level I Theories). Further, theories of interpersonal relations propose that attributional processes mediate environmental effects. Together these theories suggest that an environmental variable will influence aggressive behaviour if it affects one or more of the following mental processes: 1) perception of threat and experience of irritation or fear, 2) accessibility of aggressive responses in memorial

repertoire, 3) evaluation that aggression will lead to desirable consequences (Coie & Dodge, 1998).

Enhancement of the Attribution of Threat

A consistent finding is that provocation leads to retaliation related aggression, even in young children. Frustration and goal blocking have also been shown to induce anger, however, the *perception* of provocation is emerging as a far more important variable than the provocation itself (Dodge, Murphy & Buchsbaum, 1984 cited in Coie & Dodge, 1998). These researchers suggest that seeing something as malevolently intended and foreseeable increases chances of aggressive reaction.

Specific Level I Theories

Level I theories are those that comprise of a number of different constructs or concepts, usually loosely woven together. In the violence literature, Level I theories include Berkowitz's (1993) neoassociationist model, Novaco's (1989) work pertaining to information processing and anger, and the Huesmann and Eron collaborations in the social cognitive domain. Bandura's social learning perspective, Tsytsarev and Callahan's (1995) work on motivational mechanisms of violent behaviour, Tedeschi and Felson's (1994) social interactionist theory and Serin and Kuriychuck's (1994) Personological Theory of aggression are also examples of Level theories.

A brief overview of each of the above theories is presented below.

Berkowitz's (1993) Neoassociationist Model

With this work, Berkowitz suggests that negative affect aroused by an external stressor produces aggressive tendencies, and the anger emotion. He proposes that almost any kind of negative affect, or unpleasant feeling, can be a spur to emotional (affective) aggression. For Berkowitz, emotional aggression is the intention to do

someone harm, as opposed to instrumental aggression, which is intended to achieve an extrinsic goal.

According to this model of aggressive behaviour, an aversive event arouses negative affect, which in turn stimulates expressive-motor reactions. Some of these are associated with the 'fight' notion (a desire to attack), others with the 'flight' concept (a desire to escape). Both types of tendencies are generated by negative affect, according to Berkowitz. Initially, these fight/anger and flight/fear tendencies are not well defined, and are blended together; however, once cognitive processes are activated, emotions become more differentiated.

A network is proposed to link all the components of an emotion (i.e., thoughts, feelings and motor responses) to varying levels of association. Once this network is activated by the experience of negative arousal, all components in it are consequently activated according to the degree of association between the components. As long a negative affect is intense enough, it will activate this network. The network model suggests that when one has negative thoughts, negative feelings and bodily reactions in the associated network are also activated, and in turn the negative feelings may activate the negative cognitions. Unpleasant events without apparent connection to aggression may also activate the network due to the ability of physical discomfort to generate hostile cognitions.

NOVACO'S (1989) THEORY OF INFORMATION PROCESSING AND ANGER

This model suggests an interplay between physiology, emotion, cognition and behaviour as a response to environmental stimuli. Novaco identifies the inability to regulate anger as a risk factor for both harm doing to others, and for multiple impairments affecting health, performance and relationships.

In this information processing approach to anger Novaco proposes that cognitive mediation is an automatic and intrinsic part of the perceptual process. The selection

of what receives attention and ultimately serves as a provocation is influenced by cognitive dispositions such as expectations, schemas and scripts. Four main categories of cognitive activity proposed by Kendall and Ingram (cited in Novaco & Welsh, 1989) are structures (to store information), propositions (content of the structures), operations (procedures that process information) and products (thoughts resulting from the interaction of the other three with information).

Biases are possible in more than just the products category described above, but contemporary research still has not explored the former three cognitive taxonomies to the same extent as it has the latter. Novaco's model proposes cognitive biases in the operations and propositions categories in relation to anger. According to this model, attentional cueing (what is paid attention to), perceptual matching (comparison with previous experiences), fundamental attribution error (attributing causality to disposition and not to situation in others), false consensus (believing that more others than is true believe as one does), and anchoring effects (initial judgement becomes resistant to change) are cognitive processes that are predisposed toward anger and aggression.

HUESMANN AND ERON'S (1984, 1987, 1988) SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

The way in which an individual perceives and interprets environmental cues determines whether they will respond with aggression or an alternative behaviour. Work by these two researchers is also based on the information processing approach, and proposes that social behaviour is controlled by programs (scripts) for behaviour that have been learned during early development. Scripts are used as guides for behaviour and social problem-solving, and are learned through observation, reinforcement and personal experience. Scripts become encoded, rehearsed, stored and retrieved, and once a script has been encoded it is more likely to be retrieved in similar situations. Retrieval of a script does not automatically translate into overt behaviour, however. It is evaluated for appropriateness in light of internalised norms and in light of possible consequences. If the script is perceived as congruent with self regulating internal standards, the behaviour is more likely to occur. Thus

someone with weak prohibitions against aggression, or with the belief that it is normal to behave in that manner, is more likely to enact aggressive behaviour.

Unless appropriate standards of behaviour are internalised during critical socialisation periods, aggressive scripts are easily learned and used for the expression of aggressive behaviour. Once learned, the scripts are difficult to unlearn, and are persistent and stable. Thus, aggressive behaviour as a problem solving mechanism and as a style of interpersonal interaction, is learned early, and it is learned well.

BANDURA'S (1983) SOCIAL LEARNING MODEL OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Three crucial aspects are identified with respect to aggression by Bandura; the acquisition of aggressive behaviour, the process of instigation of the aggressive behaviour and the conditions which serve to maintain the aggressive behaviour.

Acquisition of the behaviour is proposed to occur as a result of learning, either through direct experience or observation learning. Instigation is related to the anticipated outcome of the behaviour, so that what the individual has previously learned about consequences becomes important in determining their future behaviour. Maintenance is achieved through the positive reinforcement of aggressive behaviour, for example by the reduction of aversive behaviour in others.

Observation of a role model may both teach observers to behave aggressively and may instigate performance of aggressive behaviour, according to this view.

Four processes have been identified by Bandura in which modelling can instigate aggressive behaviour; it serves a directive function (it informs the observer about the means-end contingencies in particular situations, and the observer develops the expectation that under similar conditions, if they imitate the model, they will receive the same outcome); it serves a disinhibitory function (if the model does not experience any punishment or retaliation, the observers disinhibitions may be

reduced with regard to engaging in aggressive behaviour); it may induce emotional arousal (which may increase the likelihood of imitative responses or may heighten the intensity of the aggressive response); and it may have stimulus enhancing effects (by directing the observers attention to the kinds of implements or tools being used).

Additionally, referential standards are developed both by observation and direct experience, against which an individual judges his or her own behaviour. When one feels to meet one's own internal standards, self-punishment is administered (in the form of self-contempt or self-censure). When standards are met, self praise, or self-reward is administered. The anticipation of self-punishment or self-reward can serve to regulate behaviour.

TSYTSAREV AND CALLAHAN'S (1995) MOTIVATIONAL APPROACH

These authors propose that the meager attention given to the motivational analysis of violent behaviour has been a serious oversight in this literature. The psychological meaning of violent behaviour is proposed to depend on its overt and covert functions, or in other words, upon the underlying needs that are satisfied by, or are developed through, violent behaviour.

Motivational analysis has been applied in the sexual behaviour, psychopathology, and addictive behaviour domains, and is seen to also be applicable to violent behaviour. A central concept to this model is that of *craving*. Craving is seen to develop as a motivational process unfolds from the basic need, to the goal object capable of satisfying it, then to the need for satisfaction, and finally to motivational tension reduction.

Violent behaviour is considered in the following ways: as a means of tension reduction; as a means of temporary self esteem (self-confidence as a result of violence); as a means of emotional state transformation and sensation seeking (obtaining affective experiences (adrenaline rush), or escaping from affective

experiences (boredom or emptiness); as a means of compensation or substitution (as a result of the frustration of basic needs); and as a means of communication (group affiliation or establishing a hierarchy of interpersonal relations as well as manipulation).

Becoming accustomed to using violence to satisfy one of these needs may lead the individual to employ violence as a way of meeting other needs – making violence a 'process addiction'.

TEDESCHI AND FELSON'S (1994) SOCIAL INTERACTIONIST THEORY

This theory explicitly uses a vocabulary of coercive actions, rather than using the traditional vocabulary of aggression. This is so that ties with conflict, social control, social justice, and other social influence literature are more easily apparent, and it also serves to focus the attention on the social goals of the actor.

Social interactionist theory holds the central assumption that coercive action is one form of social influence, and that coercive actions are instrumental. The actions are aimed at changing the target person(s) in some way, by deterring behaviour, by compelling behaviour, to inflict discomfort, to change disposition or to lower status, for example.

Intent is another central theme in this model, and an intentional action is defined as one performed with the expectation that it will provide an outcome value to the actor. Outcome is differentiated into proximal and terminal, with proximal outcome having a perceived causal relationship with a valued terminal outcome (i.e., the proximal outcome of a threat is compliance, and compliance is valued because it brings money, safety or something else of value).

Cognitive evaluation is employed by an actor in deciding whether or not to use a coercive action. Value of outcome, expectation of success in achieving this outcome,

expectations of incurring costs, and the perceived negative value of these costs are all basic elements involved in this decision making process. Coercive actions often involve strong emotions, quick decisions and scripted behaviours, and in some instances a satisficing principle (one option is considered, it seems satisfactory, so no other options are evaluated) . While some coercive behaviour may appear impulsive, the individual is able to inhibit their behaviour, when the costs are expected to be high. The problem arises when individuals do not consider costs, such as when alcohol or extreme rage are involved.

In this model, human agency and blame are viewed as the critical factors that determine whether an aversive stimulus leads to coercive action or not.

SERIN AND KURIYCHUCK'S (1994) PERSONOLOGICAL THEORY OF AGGRESSION

This model highlights the convergence of two main lines of investigation into violence; impulsivity and cognitive schema of hostile attribution. The importance of personality, or dispositional variables, in understanding violence is underscored by these theorists. Both of the above two mentioned concepts, hostile attribution schema and disinhibition, are assumed to be characteristic of violent behaviour.

Disinhibition is seen as a failure to regulate behaviour, and a synergistic relationship is proposed between impulsivity and self-schema. When aroused, violent offenders are suggested to be more impulsive and less likely to consider important cues, thus acting without reflection and emitting a dominant aggressive response.

One reason for the failure to reflect is proposed to be based on the concept of effortful processing. When aroused or disinhibited, offenders may find it too effortful to assimilate information regarding alternative responses into their behavioural repertoire.

Specific Level II Theories

Level II theories, those that are based around a single factor, include Dollard et al's (1939 cited in Huesmann, 1994) aggression-frustration hypothesis, Megargee's (1966) over- and undercontrolled theory of violent offenders, and Baumeister's (1996) concept of high self esteem and its relationship to aggression.

DOLLARD ET AL'S (1939) AGGRESSION-FRUSTRATION HYPOTHESIS

As mentioned previously, this theory was the first concerted approach to aggression as a learned behaviour. However, much of the theory relies on a drive, or instinct, conceptualisation of aggression. The premise of the theory is that when an individual becomes frustrated (i.e., when goals are thwarted) the individual responds aggressively.

MEGARGEE'S (1966) OVERCONTROLLED–UNDERCONTROLLED VIOLENT OFFENDERS

This model of violent offending suggests that, contrary to popular assumptions, highly violent acts are associated with excessive, rather than inadequate, control of aggressive impulses. The strength of inhibition in such cases may be such that relatively minor frustrations will not be acted upon, thus these minor frustrations are suppressed. It is proposed that suppressed frustrations accumulate until an inhibitory threshold, excessively high for these individuals, is breached, perhaps by a minor frustration, and an act of murderous intent is triggered (Du Toit & Duckitt, 1990).

An undercontrolled person is conceptualised as possibly being a stereotypically aggressive personality, with minimal inhibitions against the expression of aggression and a repertoire of aggressive behaviour that ranged from mild to extreme depending on the intensity of the provocation.

Individuals who commit extreme and serious acts of violence, such as murder, are thought to be overcontrolled or undercontrolled, while those individuals who commit

minor violent offences such as common assault are thought to be undercontrolled. Megargee developed an MMPI-based scale to differentiate over- from undercontrolled persons termed the Overcontrolled Hostility (OH) Scale. However, research by other investigators into this proposed model of violent behaviour has consistently produced inconsistent results, and the validity of the concept is at present still questionable.

BAUMEISTER'S (1996) CONCEPT OF HIGH SELF ESTEEM

This model does not explicitly depict self esteem as an independent and direct cause of violence, rather, it proposes that the major cause of violence is high self esteem combined with ego threat.

When favourable views about the self are questioned, mocked, challenged or otherwise jeopardised, people may behave aggressively, particularly against the source of the threat. Thus, aggression emerges from a discrepancy between two views of self, a favourable self-appraisal, and an external appraisal that is much less favourable.

One important premise for the assertions of this approach to aggression is that people are noted to be very reluctant to revise their self-appraisals in a downward direction, thus any threat to a favourable impression is likely to elicit a negative response. Additionally, the premise that threatened egotism causes aggression suggests that the higher the self self-esteem, the greater the range of possible threats to it.

The assertion that it is high, and not low, self esteem, that may be responsible for aggressive behaviour raises many questions, the most pressing being that if this is so, what harm is society creating by advocating a pursuit for high self-esteem? Further research is needed to clarify this intriguing proposition.

Summary of Available Literature

It is clear from the above review of the available violence literature, particularly in light of its organisation according to the meta-theoretical approach advocated by Ward and Hudson (1996b cited in Polaschek et al, 1998), that valuable theoretical formulations with regard to the etiology, identification, and clarification of critical aspects of the causes and developmental pathways of violent and aggressive behaviour have been advanced. However, there exists a notable gap with regard to Level III process models. Hollin and Howells (1989) identified this gap in our knowledge almost a decade ago, stating that while the literature suggests that violent offenders often 'perceive' insult or provocation, what remains to be answered is how such a perceptual set is developed and how it leads to violence.

1.4. PROCESS MODELS

Critical research into the fundamental processes engaged in by offenders when they behave violently is as yet unavailable and is thus not integrated into intervention methodologies. A particular strength of process models lies in their ability to inform appropriate intervention methodologies by making explicit identifiable choice points within an offence process. Clarification of choice points in the offence process allow intervention techniques to be accurately targeted at interrupting the offender's progression through the offence chain at salient and offence relevant points. Such an approach reduces the risk of ignoring important offence related issues in intervention, or of focusing treatment modules at ineffective or inappropriate parts of the offence chain.

Process Models in the Sex Offending literature

The efficacy of process models in clarifying salient focal points in offence processes, and subsequently informing intervention strategies, is successfully demonstrated in the sex offending literature.

In 1992, Hudson, Ward and Marshall published a paper concerning a reformulation of Relapse Prevention theory, and more specifically, of the abstinence violation effect (AVE) documented with the context of relapse prevention theory. By applying Weiner's (1986) attributional theory to the AVE, resulting in what they termed the WAVE, they formulated a clear link between cognitions, behaviour and affect with regard to escalation and maintenance of addictive behaviours. This reformulation identified the importance of examining attributions and emotions at various points in an offender's offence chain, and this observation provided support for further study into possible pathways for sex offenders with regard to their offending. Since publication of this paper, the investigators have continued work to refine this concept. The descriptive model has since been extended to include complex pathways of offending that incorporate cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects of sex offending, goal theory and begins to clarify the influence of self regulation in relapse. Recent publications include work on the dysfunctional cognitions of child molesters (Ward, Fon, Hudson, & McCormack, 1998), implicit planning (Ward & Hudson, in press) and implicit theories of child molesters' (Ward & Keenan, in press).

Clinical application of this research, specifically with regard to intervention methodologies, has been most successful. A special treatment unit for incarcerated sex offenders, Kia Marama, in Christchurch, New Zealand, has integrated the above research into its therapy modules, particularly its relapse prevention module, with what is emerging as considerable success (as measured by recidivism rates). The ability of the increasingly sophisticated process model for sex offenders to accurately inform intervention strategies illustrates the utility of this approach to formulating offence behaviours.

1.5. A PROCESS MODEL FOR VIOLENT OFFENDERS

The calculable success of what began as a simple descriptive model of offence

processes for sex offenders, both in terms of its contribution to intervention methodology, and in terms of its equally important function as the basis for ongoing, theoretical formulation, has been noted. This observation, coupled with the identified lack of process models for violent offending in the currently available literature, suggest that the development of a preliminary descriptive model of violent offending is well supported.

Moreover, the opening of a specialised treatment unit for violent offenders in New Zealand further underscores the need for the development of a model that seeks to provide a framework for research targeted at developing appropriate intervention strategies. A process model of violent offending could potentially begin to generate information that could inform intervention methodology for this, and other treatment providers.

The Present Study

The purpose of the present study, therefore, was to develop a Level III descriptive model of the process of violent offending. Descriptive process models are best developed using a qualitative analytical framework (Hudson, 1998). This type of approach is data, not theory, driven, in other words the researcher forms no preconceived hypotheses to test against the data. Rather, the *data* drives the research process, ensuring that the final model is representative of the offence processes of the population from which it was derived.

Certain guidelines are clearly needed to constrain the almost limitless scope of such a study. The following parameters were devised for the present research – narrative descriptions of the index, or most typical, violent offense were be constrained by six broad guidelines. These guidelines functioned to restrict interview narratives to: the behaviour, cognitions, and emotions experienced by the participants at each of the three main stages of offending, namely immediately prior to the offense commencing, during the offense, and following offense completion.

Background information, including demographic variables and social, employment and school, interpersonal and offending histories were included in the study, in order to form an idea of overall general functioning outside of offense behaviours.

The descriptive model of the process of violent offending retained as broad a scope as was possible within the constraints of time and resources. This included a decision to extend the offender population across violent offence types, and across Maori and Pakeha ethnicity groups. Thus, rather than restricting the research to construction of a model of *only* aggravated robbery, or of *only* serious assault, the participants were more representative of a cross section of the violent offender population in terms of offence type. The model is therefore one of violent *offending* and not one of a more narrowly defined violent *offense*. Relatedly, by including both Maori and Pakeha offenders in the research sample, the model will be representative of the majority of the violent offending population in our prisons. By extending the focus of the study in this way, a more comprehensive account of the processes inherent in all violent offending, for both cultures, was hoped to be offered at its conclusion.

Documentation of similarities and differences between offender types will provide insight into intervention requirements for a heterogeneous population, and may also shed light on possible prevention strategies. Both these goals are more likely to be effectively and appropriately met with the use of a cross-sectional population that will provide a basis for future development of accurate and targeted strategies with regard to specific needs for specific offence types. The study may find particular variables that appear to impact upon the process of offending across offence types. Should this prove to be the case, further research may subsequently clarify intervention goals related to these core components in violent offender treatment programmes.

2. METHOD

The purpose of the present study was to develop a descriptive process model of violent offending. The following five sections: outline the grounded theory approach; describe the method of participant selection and recruitment; describe the data collection procedures; present the method of protocol analysis and model development; and offer a note of caution regarding inter-rater reliability.

2.1. GROUNDED THEORY

The theoretical framework used in the present study was that of Grounded Theory, or, more specifically, one particular theoretical approach to grounded theory, the Constant Comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded Theory as a general approach contrasts with traditional hypothetico-deductive research methods in that it is 'data-driven' and thus not based on utilising data in order to prove or test an existing theory. A prominent feature of the grounded theory approach is the *systematic* method of data collection and data analysis. This method results in phenomenon description, or theory generation, that is 'grounded' in the data from which it was derived.

Constant Comparative Method

This method is viewed in qualitative research literature (i.e., Rennie, Phillips & Quartaro, 1988) as constituting a systematisation of the grounded theory approach, by forcing researchers to stay close to their data. The strength of this technique is that it combines two common goals of grounded theory research; that of proving a theoretical proposition, and that of generating new theories. The constant comparative method limits theorising until trends or patterns are evident as a result of data-driven categorisation procedures. This ensures that any final conclusions made

are adequately grounded in the data, and are thus representative of the population sampled, and not merely products of the researcher's biases or emphasis.

Inductive-Deductive Analysis

A central feature of this approach is the constant comparative analysis of new data with existing categories. Concepts and categories are inductively generated, by searching for similarities and differences inherent within the protocols, and are then deductively verified, by collecting and coding (categorising) additional data to these initial formulations. The sensitivity of the resulting theory reflects the subtle nuances within the phenomenon under investigation (Rennie et al., 1988).

Application of the Constant Comparative Method

This method may be applied to the generation of phenomenological or *descriptive* models, such as the one proposed in this study, or the approach may be extended to include *development* of an integrated theory.

The development of an integrated theory of violent offending is beyond the aim and scope of the present study. Therefore, latter procedures of this approach have not been applied to the present data, though such further application has been identified as an area for future research. The reader is directed to Strauss and Corbin (1990) for a more comprehensive description of grounded theory, and to Rennie et al (1988) for an illustration of its application.

2.2. PARTICIPANTS

Based on the grounded theory approach to participant selection, participants who were judged to best represent the research phenomenon, in this case violent offending, were selected. The definition of 'violent offence' used in this research was based on the selection protocols in use at the newly established Violence

Prevention Unit, Rimutaka Prison, Wellington. The Serious Violent Offence legislation suggests that aggravated robbery, assaults, murder and manslaughter offences may be perceived as 'violent offences' and acceptance into the treatment programme is based on these criteria (Hamilton, 1997).

Selection

The principle of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which refers to selection of new data sources on the basis of emerging theories or observations, so that variability within the focal area, in this case the violent offender population, may be clarified, was applied to participant selection. This principle required that comparison groups, logically inferred from pre-research observations about this focal population, were constructed.

For this, *offence type* was selected as one basis for comparison. Pre-research observations indicated that the rate of interpersonal violent offending (i.e., grievous bodily harm (GBH), assault, manslaughter and murder offences) is steadily increasing in New Zealand. It seemed pertinent to compare offenders of this type with other types of violent offenders (i.e., aggravated robbers). In addition, an over representation of Maori offenders in our prisons, both generally, and more specifically for violent offence convictions, was observed. This too, indicated that exploration of this phenomenon in the present research may prove valuable with regard to offence process clarification for this population of violent offenders. As a result *ethnicity* was selected as the basis for the second comparison group.

Offence-type comparison group construction followed the definitions of violent offending outlined in the Serious Violent Offence legislation described above. Three groups were proposed: the first comprising of six GBH/assault offenders; the second of four aggravated robbery offenders; and the third group of one murder and one manslaughter offender. The two ethnicity based groups were selected so as to be representative of the two most common New Zealand cultures; Maori and Pakeha.

The number of participants in each of the three offence-type groups was arrived at as a function of time constraints. Grounded theory research proper requires that data is collected and systematically analysed until *saturation* of categories generated by the data is achieved (see section 2.4.). This must then be followed by cross validation of the categories using further, new data to ensure that the final categories are representative of the focal population, and no new concepts or categories are revealed by applying new protocols to existing ones. Because time constraints were an unfortunate aspect of the present research, it was decided to restrict the number of participants to twelve offenders. Rennie et al (1988) suggest that saturation is likely to be achieved after analysis of five to ten protocols. Thus a total of twelve participants was expected to be sufficient to achieve the initial saturation required in order for a preliminary model to be constructed. Cross validation of the model requires a larger number of participants. The omission of a cross validating component to this model's construction is identified as a limitation of the study, and as a valuable direction for future research.

The distribution of offence type participants across the groups was based on representation of criminological trends, specifically, the marked increase in interpersonal violent offending. In order to achieve a proportionally representative distribution, the GBH/Assault group was assigned half of the twelve participants. Aggravated robbery offenders were assigned one third of the total number of participants, enough for basic comparison with GBH/Assault offenders, but allowing for two remaining participants to be assigned to a Murder/Manslaughter group. The two participants in this last group were included to represent the heterogeneity evident in the population defined as violent offenders by legislation and the criminal justice system.

Recruitment

The culmination of the above process and the associated proposed parameters for participant selection resulted in the decision to extract the research sample from the population of incarcerated male inmates at Paparua Prison, Christchurch. Permission

was obtained from the Department of Corrections, and following a meeting with management at Paparua Prison, individual unit managers were informed of the research and instructed to allow the author access to Department of Corrections' prison files in order to identify inmates meeting the above defined criteria. A list of possible participants was thus generated, and these inmates were subsequently approached by the author. A verbal and written explanation of the research was provided to each inmate individually, and included a description of the study's purpose, the tasks involved, and participant rights (refer to Appendix 1.). Many of the inmates identified as appropriate for the present study had previously participated in Department of Corrections research. A component of this research was an in-depth interview designed to elicit details pertaining to demographic information, social history, offending history, developmental history, interpersonal and social competencies and substance use or misuse (refer to Appendix 3.). As part of their agreement to participate in the present study, offenders consented to the author's use of information obtained in this previous interview. Twelve inmates volunteered to participate in the research, and their consent was obtained in writing (refer to Appendix 2.). No benefits related to incarceration or prison process were accrued by the participants in this research, and this aspect of participation was clarified before volunteers signed consent documents.

2.3. DATA COLLECTION

Each participant was interviewed by the author. Interviews lasted between one to two hours, were audiotaped and later transcribed.

Interviews

The interview format was predominantly unstructured, as the purpose of the grounded theory approach was to collect data without actively directing or eliciting particular responses. Parameters previously outlined as guiding principles of the present research (cognitions, behaviours and emotions, in before, during and after offence stages) served as broad constraints on the interview process. Participants

were asked to systematically describe each of the three offence stages according to these parameters, and the interviewer attempted to be as minimally directive of this process as was feasible. However, where participants failed to provide sufficient information surrounding any of the parameters mentioned above, the interviewer posed open-ended questions to elicit this information (e.g., 'Describe to me what you were thinking at this point', or 'How were you feeling when this was happening?').

The initial 15-20 minutes of the interview were directed at an explanation of requirements and a description of the participant's conflict resolution skills. The remaining interview followed the format outlined above.

Protocols

First, audiotaped interviews were transcribed verbatim by the author. Second, transcripts were 'chunked' into meaning units. Meaning units were portions of data, of variable length, that embodied a uniquely meaningful statement or idea. These meaning units were then categorised, as outlined in section 2.4.

2.4. PROTOCOL ANALYSIS AND MODEL DEVELOPMENT

In the first stage of data analysis, *open coding,* concepts were extracted from transcribed interviews. This involved breaking down participant responses and statements into 'meaning units' (Rennie et al.,1988). One transcript was randomly selected, and open coding commenced based on this protocol. Protocols for the remaining eleven offenders were compared to the provisional categories generated by the first (GBH/Assault type) offender's protocol. One model of the process involved in violent offending adequately provided for all three offence types, and for both ethnic groups. Group based pathway analysis was performed once the model's structure had been finalised.

Open Coding

Meaning units were paragraphs, sentences, or phrases that contained information regarding the offending process (i.e., behaviours, emotions and cognitions ate various stages of the offence process). An example of a meaning unit, extracted from the data in the present study follows:

> *" I had a bit of stress going on. The girlfriend was getting uptight, saying 'Don't do anything!' and stuff like that, trying to stop me. It made me want to go out and do more, you know, to show her she's not the boss of me."*

Next, concepts were extracted from each meaning unit. The above example was initially considered to contain the following concepts:

1. Stressful (negative) mood
2. Behavioural restrictions
3. Cognitive response (to behavioral restrictions)
4. Justification for cognitive response

The ability of the concepts to reliably account for the data was constantly verified by deductive analysis.

Categorisation

The second stage of analysis entailed sorting the concepts into clusters on the basis of semantically similar meaning, and assigning the cluster a name (category label). Labels assigned to categories were more abstract than the concepts they denoted, but descriptive enough to retain the meaning of the data they represented. As the researcher worked systematically through the protocols, concepts were compared to existing categories and were assigned to as many as they appeared to fit. If no match was made, a new category was developed. The comparison of different types of data (such as that generated by different offence types) to existing categories helped to broaden the scope of the resultant model and functioned to offset coding biases.

During the second phase of analysis, concepts from data not used in the generation of initial provisional categories were compared to the existing categories and coded accordingly - again, where the concepts did not fit any existing categories, new ones were developed.

Category Refinement

The comparison of categories formed the basis of the third analytic stage. The provisional categories developed thus far were searched for similarities and differences in order to eliminate redundant or overlapping categories, and to ensure that only the most effective and appropriate categories remained. This involved collapsing some categories into subcategories of an overarching one (i.e., several clusters describing affective states [stressed/angry/anxious/happy/neutral] were collapsed into two clusters labelled 'negative' and 'positive' proximal mood). Modification and refinement of categories continued until saturation occurred, in other words, until new protocols did not reveal new concepts requiring new categories, but could be effectively assigned to existing categories. Defining features of saturated categories were noted in order to obtain mutually exclusive distinctions between categories. The identification of 'core' categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was the final aspect of the analysis procedure. Core categories were those that comprised of more concepts, and were thus more saturated, than other categories. They formed the structural outline of the model, with relationships between these and other categories formulated to build the initial version of the model. The categories, and their relationships to each other, were tested and reconstructed until a model sensitive to the data, and with heuristic value, was developed.

2.5. PATHWAY ANALYSIS

In order to identify pathways through the model on the basis of the comparison groups used in this research, each individual offender's behaviour was recorded for each choice point in the final model (refer to Appendix 4.). These results were grouped according to offence-type, ethnicity, and finally affect regulation, which had

emerged as a possible differentiating variable. Each group's responses on the recording sheets were plotted onto a graphic depiction of the final, full, model and checked for observable similarities, and more specifically, differences, in their progression through the phase choice points.

2.6. MODEL RELIABILITY

Grounded theory requires that all analytical procedures are verified by independent raters in order to reduce the effect of possible rater biases. For the present study, protocol coding and preliminary data analysis was performed primarily by the author, with some input from a co-rater. Further independent reliability checks were not possible due to time constraints, and this omission is recognised as a limitation of the research. The co-rater was relatively unfamiliar with the literature in this area, however, and may thus have been prevented from inadvertently directing protocol analysis or theoretical formulations. This may have provided a limited degree of protection with regard to such biases on the part of the primary rater.

3. Results

This section contains five parts; in the first, participant demographic information is presented. This is followed by a brief presentation of the model's approach to affective state and its influence on phases and categories, followed by a broad overview of the model at its most abstract level, delineating only the major categories accompanied by a simple explanation of phase and category interaction. The fourth section presents a detailed outline and analysis of model components, including subcategories and is illustrated by narrative examples, while the fifth and final section presents a preliminary attempt to track participant offence pathways through the model.

In the interests of clarity, it is necessary to provide the reader with some explanation of the terminology adopted by the author. The reader should bear in mind the following distinction: the term 'offence performance' refers to the *act of violence* perpetrated by the offender, in other words, it denotes the specific physical behaviour aimed at successful goal achievement (i.e., stabbing, hitting, robbing or shooting). The term 'offence' refers to the entire offence process or chain, and includes the initial triggering event and its interpretation; subsequent goal formation; preparation; performance of the violent act, and post-performance behaviour.

3.1. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The model's development was based on self-reported information provided by 12 male violent offenders incarcerated at Paparua Prison, Christchurch. Of these, six were Pakeha, and six were Maori. Groups were matched on offence type (three Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH)/Assault offenders; two Aggravated Robbery offenders; and one Murder/Manslaughter offender, in each group). It was not possible to match the Murder/Manslaughter offence type across the two groups

exactly, and in the Maori offender group the participant was charged with murder, in the Pakeha group the participant was charged with Manslaughter.

The mean age for the entire sample was 30.25 years, with Maori offenders being overall a little younger than Pakeha offenders (27.5 years and 33.0 years, respectively). The age range for the entire sample was 22 years to 43 years. For Maori participants it was 22 years to 35 years and for Pakeha offenders it was 25 years to 43 years.

Sentence length according to offence type ranged from 2.2 years to 7.0 years for GBH/Assault offences, 3.0 to 9.6 years for Aggravated Robbery offences, and 8.0 to 15.0 years for Manslaughter/Murder offences (respectively). For Maori, sentence length ranged from 2.5 to 15.0 years, for Pakeha the range was 2.2 to 9.6 years.

Previous offending histories were quite evenly matched across the two groups. Three offenders had no prior violent offence convictions, of these two were Aggravated Robbery offenders (one Maori and one Pakeha) and one was convicted for Manslaughter (Pakeha). The remaining nine offenders all had previous violent offending convictions, ranging from common assault to stabbing and shooting charges. Number of previous violence convictions ranged from one to 12. All offenders admitted to previous violent offending, however, even where they had not been formally charged or convicted for these. Most of these unofficial violent offences were of an assault type, however, some involved aggravated robbery, gang related shootings and stabbings and domestic violence incidents.

Three of the six Pakeha offenders (all three were GBH/Assault type offenders) reported previous, but not current, gang involvement. One Maori offender reported previous gang involvement (Aggravated Robbery offender), and four of the six Maori offenders reported current gang involvement (two GBH/Assault offenders, one Murder offender and one Aggravated Robbery offender).

Two Maori (one GBH/Assault and one Aggravated Robbery offender) and one Pakeha (GBH/Assault offender) denied the use of substances in relation to the commission of their index offence. Across offence type, GBH/Assault and Aggravated Robbery groups both included at least one offender for whom substance use was unrelated to the commission of their index crime. It appeared that GBH/Assault type offenders tended to use alcohol and/or cannabis if they used substances in relation to their offending. Aggravated Robbery offenders alternatively or additionally used cocaine and /or 'downers', as did the offender charged with Murder. The Manslaughter offender had used cannabis prior to commission of his offence and regularly took, as he did on the day of the offence, high doses of morphine for pain relief in relation to a chronic and severe arthritis condition.

Overall, Maori offenders tended to be in their 20's while Pakeha offenders tended to be slightly older. Maori offenders tended to have more current gang involvement. Sentence length, previous violent offending history, and substance use tended to be quite evenly matched across the two groups.

3.2. INFLUENCE OF AFFECTIVE STATE

In its entirety, the model of violent behaviour outlined in this work comprises six phases: Situational Context; Justification; Goal Formation; Preparation; Offence Performance; and Post-Performance. Each phase contains between three and four major categories (see Figure 3.2) and each major category has between two and four subcategories.

Throughout the offence chain, the influence of affective, or mood, state is of primary import. However, beyond the specific mood related category in ***Phase I: Situational Context***, no further explicit affect related categories have been incorporated into the model's phase components. The reasoning for this approach is explained below.

The category Proximal Mood was developed as a result of evidence that this variable exerted considerable influence on the entire offence process. Offenders' proximal mood provided the initial contextual framework from which all further offence related decisions were made. It therefore seemed warranted to include this variable as a phase component in its own right. While affective state is equally important at subsequent phases, particularly in the evaluation stages, variance between offenders and across phase and stage boundaries meant it was more practical to present this variable in the detailed narrative descriptions of each phase. Figure 3.2. depicts the stages at which affective state is a pertinent consideration.

With regard to affective state as an ongoing influence on offence behaviour, offender descriptions of these suggested that an orthogonal representation provided the most comprehensive framework for this variable. Offender mood states, both at the time of the triggering event, and at subsequent stages, were able to be differentiated firstly as either positive or negative. However, this dichotomous categorisation of a single dimension failed to capture the considerable variance across offenders, particularly with regard to the degree of intensity that one or other affective state type was present at any given time. It became evident that a two dimensional representation more adequately captured this phenomenon (see Figure 3.1).

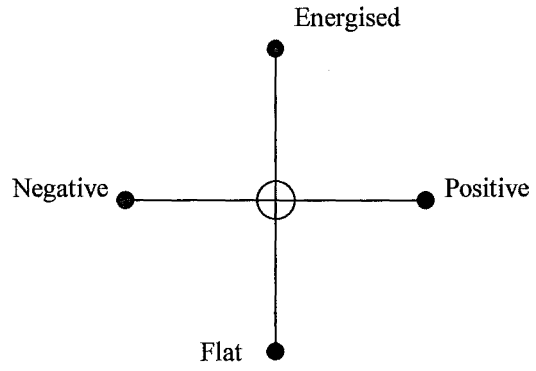


Figure 3.1. Orthogonal representation of affective state.

Two dimensions, *affective tone* (negative to positive) and *affective intensity* (flat to energised), intersect at the midpoint. Some offenders tended to oscillate between positive and negative affect at a fairly constant intensity level (e.g., flat-negative at some phases, flat-positive at others), however, not all participants exhibited this type of affective pathway. Some tended to oscillate, instead, between the two intensity extremes, while remaining fairly constant on the affective tone dimension (e.g., flat-negative at early phases and energised-negative at subsequent ones). The orthogonal representation of affective state used by the model provides for both types of affective pathways, and additionally allowed for participants with more fluctuating affective states to be equally efficiently represented (e.g., flat-positive at early phases, energised negative at subsequent ones, with a swing to middle-positive during the offence performance phase, settling at a middle-negative state during the reflective evaluation phase). Flat affect, both positive and negative, appeared to be similar at a concrete level. For example, one offender reported:

> *"I felt nothing really, it was just a job, like doing the gardening. I wasn't angry or anything, , but I wouldn't say I was happy either, really, just.... ....nothing, maybe bored..."*

This type of affective state was conceptualised as flat-negative. Flat-positive affect included very mild feelings of wellbeing, and was assigned where there was an expressive distinction between positive rather than negative mood state, though the degree of affect was similarly minimal. Energised-negative affect in its most extreme form may be conceptualised as rage, and energised-positive affective states as considerable feelings of wellbeing, happiness, or satisfaction. The midpoint on the affective tone dimension represents an *arousal*, rather than a *neutral* affective state. Data suggested that, in many cases, both feelings of anxiety and feelings likened to a 'hyped-up', 'adrenaline buzz' affective state, represented forms of affective ambiguity, reliant on a high degree of contextual labelling. The midpoint intersection of the affective tone and affective intensity continuums thus represents similar concepts both with regard to affective tone and affective intensity,

differentiated by the offender's interpretation of this state of arousal as desirable or aversive.

3.3. OVERVIEW OF THE MODEL

The following section presents a broad overview of the model's six phases and major categorical components. A more detailed analysis of categories, including subcategories and narrative examples, is presented in section 3.4.

In ***Phase I: Situational Context***, the first link in the offence chain, Background Factors, comprises historical life events and circumstances as described by the offender. Relevant psychological vulnerabilities arising out of these background factors were included in this category. The second major category in this phase, Offence Related Variables, describes relevant experiential and cognitive factors associated specifically with the offender's offending history. Proximal Mood, the third category in the first phase, refers to the mood state the offender reported predominantly experiencing during the minutes, hours, or in some cases days, preceding the commission of the offence. The proximal mood state was influenced by background variables and by offence related variables, and had bearing on the offender's response type in the second phase of the model.

In ***Phase II: Justification***, a Triggering Event, was experienced by the offender. This event was subsequently Labelled, and the offender's proximal mood was seen to influence this process. Labelling provided the offender with a contextual framework, and informed his Response to the triggering event

During ***Phase III: Goal Formation***, the Establishment of Offence Goal(s) stage occurred. Goals were formed on the basis of the label assigned in the previous phase, that is, on the basis of the offender's interpretation of the triggering event. Labelling the offence goal(s) from a menu of five general offence intention types

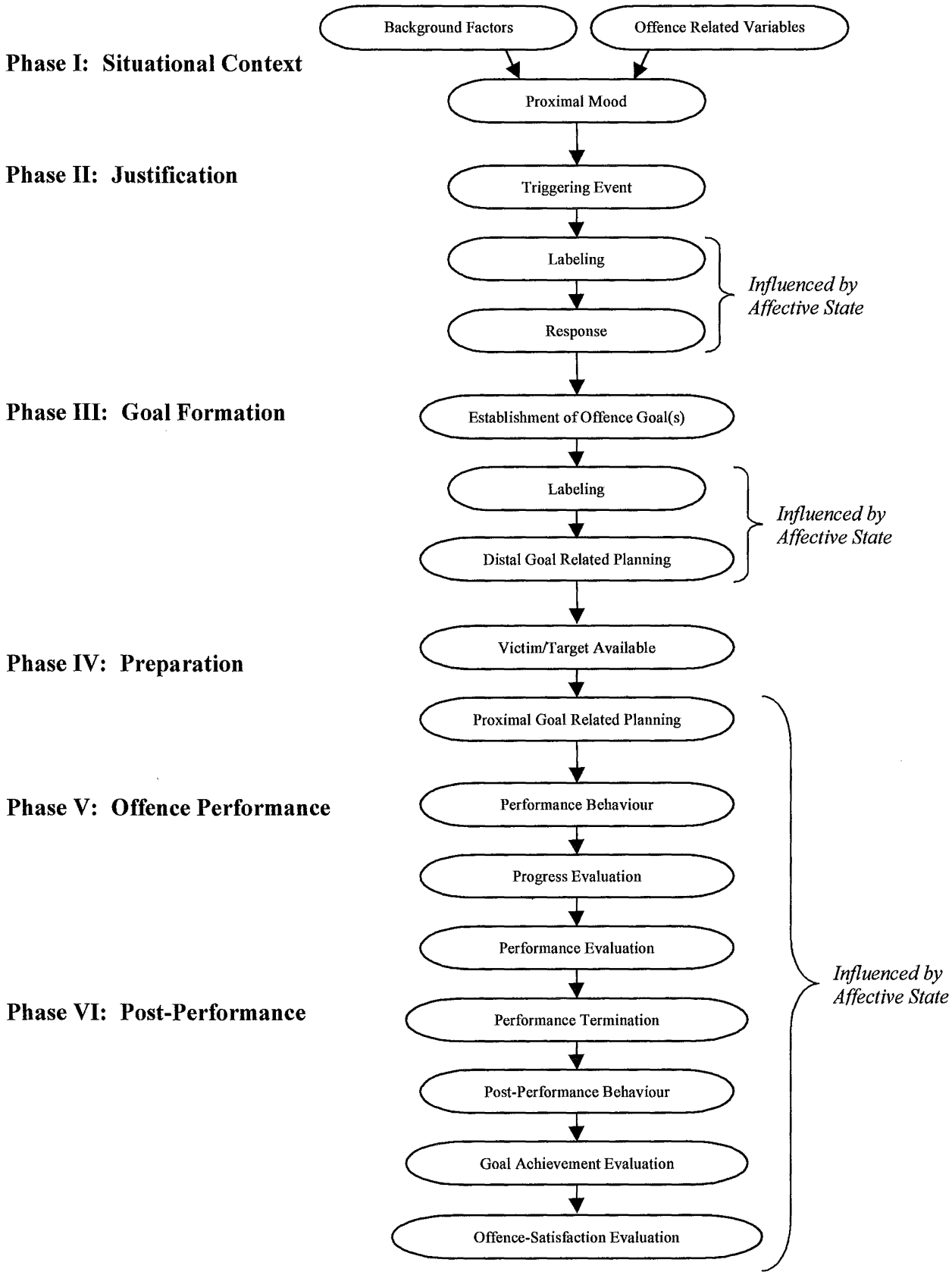


Figure 3.2. Overview of model delineating major categories and component boundaries.

followed. The context in which goal formation occurred, specifically whether this process happened in the presence or absence of a victim or target, had bearing on whether or not the offender engaged in Distal Goal Related Planning. Specifically, access to this stage was, by definition, restricted to offenders who engaged in goal formation in the absence of a victim or target.

Once the offender had secured proximal access to his victim or target, the stage Victim/Target Available had been reached. At this point the offender was considered to have commenced ***Phase IV: Preparation***. From here, he entered Proximal Goal Related Planning, the final stage in this phase.

Phase V: Offence Performance commences with the decision to enter the Performance Behaviour stage. Commonly, some form of Progress Evaluation was carried out during the performance stage, and this evaluation tended to focus on progression toward goal achievement. The third and last stage in this phase, Performance Termination, refers to the circumstances surrounding the completion, or termination, of the offence act. Practically, this refers to the distinction between voluntary and mandatory performance termination.

The last phase, ***Phase VI: Post-Performance***, comprises of four main categories or stages. Performance Evaluation, is concerned, as the name suggests, with evaluating the actual performance or offence act. This evaluation occurred before specific Post-Performance Behaviour was engaged in (i.e., while the victim or target was still accessible) and revolved around a temporal performance termination decision. Post-Performance Behaviour comprises immediate situation management, where the concern was generally escape and/or detection avoidance.

Following on from this stage is Goal Achievement Evaluation, which, while still within approximately one hour of performance termination, tended to be somewhat broader in scope than goal achievement evaluation, and was primarily aimed at evaluating whether offence goals had been achieved or not, using a dichotomous

choice point strategy. This differs from Offence Satisfaction Evaluation, which tended to occur within approximately three days of performance termination, and which appeared to be a more general, overall offence evaluation, and included evaluation of: goal formation, planning, and performance. This evaluation tended to produce a satisfaction rating, rather than the more categorical goal achievement evaluation of the previous stage.

3.4. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE MODEL

This section outlines in greater detail and depth each of the six phases that make up the model. All major categories in each phase, in addition to the subcategories associated with each major stage, are presented and for each phase category-representative narrative examples are given. In addition, graphic representations for each phase illustrate the sequence and boundaries between categories and subcategories. Note that in several graphic representations the reader will observe choice boxes outlined in small dotted lines, rather than solid black lines. These boxes represent *hypothetical* options. These option were described by offenders as possible choices that, with the benefit of retrospect, they realised they could have made at the time of the offence. They are included to highlight plausible exit points in the offence chain.

Phase I: Situational Context

The first phase in the offence process is formulated slightly differently from subsequent ones. The primary difference is that two categories Background Factors and Offence Related Variables (see Figure 3.3.) simultaneously feed into a third category Proximal Mood. In subsequent offence process phases, generally only one major category forms the link between one phase and the next.

BACKGROUND FACTORS

The Background Factors category comprises a variety of temporally different variables. These, and offence related factors, were described by offenders, and subsequently organised into nine clusters in order to clarify distribution across offence type and ethnicity (refer to Appendix 5.)

First, a number of key childhood experiences, generally of a negative nature (i.e., parental loss, harsh and inconsistent discipline, poor attachment to primary caregiver, chaotic home-life, parental substance use/misuse and economic hardship), which may be conceptualised as a cluster of factors under the heading **developmental adversity** belong to this category.

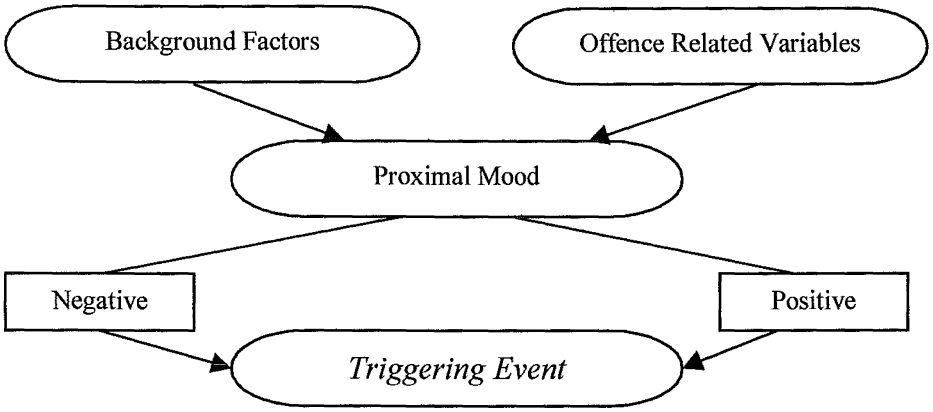


Figure 3.3. Phase I: Situational Context

Additionally, **personality and temperament** (i.e., antisocial attitudes, anxiety, perfectionistic or impulsive traits); **educational and occupational factors** (i.e., educational failure, truancy, attention and concentration problems, lack of full time employment, and propensity to boredom) ; **social competency** (i.e., problem-solving and communication skills deficits, rigid or callous attitudes, being a loner and assertiveness skill deficits), **interpersonal style** (i.e., conflict resolution skill deficits, intimacy problems, empathy deficits and an irresponsible attitude toward others); and

substance use or misuse (i.e., dependence on substances, medical complications, affective regulation as a goal of substance use, relaxation as a goal of substance use, and escape as a goal of substance use) are further clusters that belong to the Background Factors category. Note that the variables 'use of hard drugs', 'dependence on hard drugs' and 'hard drugs as a precursor to offending in the Substance Use/Misuse cluster refer to cocaine, LSD, 'downers', amphetamines, morphine, opium methadone and heroin.

Background factors may be perceived as falling on a temporal dimension, with the developmental adversity cluster as the most distal, and educational/occupational, social competence, interpersonal style and substance use/misuse clusters as progressively more proximal clusters. Both distal and proximal clusters, as well as reciprocal interactions between these, may play a role in the development of an offender's psychological vulnerabilities. For instance, poor modelling of effective conflict resolution by caregivers (developmental adversity cluster) may result in poor conflict resolution skills (interpersonal style cluster), which may be seen as influencing an offender's propensity to violence. Similarly, social competency deficits such as a rigid, inflexible attitude, possibly vicariously learned (developmental adversity cluster), may exacerbate interpersonal difficulties, which may in turn promote substance use/misuse, all of which may result in a propensity to offending. Clearly, attitudes, beliefs, expectations and behaviours may all arise out of background factors, and serve to play a role in current offending behaviour.

Offence Related Variables

Offence Related Variables are distinct from background factors in that they specifically pertain to distal and proximal factors that have some relation to offending behaviour. Offence related clusters include Offending History, Current Offence Related Attitudes and Substance Use Related to Offending (see Appendix 5.). The cluster **Offending History** includes variables such as experience of previous similar incidents, experience of previous similar trigger events, financial

benefit related to offending, affect regulation as a function of offending, previous prison terms, self esteem benefits as a function of offending and offending to support substance use. Variables in the **Current Offence Related Attitudes** cluster include satisfaction with criminal life style, refusal to change, belief that change is impossible, belief that change is pointless, and gang membership. Lastly, substance use linked to escalating aggression, substance use as a precursor to offending behaviour and black-outs are variables in the **Substance Use Related to Offending** cluster.

Specific offence related variables, particularly **Previous Similar Incidents** and **Previous Similar Triggers** (Offence History cluster), were the basis of comparison used by offenders when evaluating a triggering event. For example one offender reported:

> *"I thought 'he's a dirty nark' and even though I wasn't the one he narked on, I ...well, I tend to connect things up together, you know? And I had been narked on myself, by other people, so any nark gets me going...."*

This narrative illustrates how an offence related cognitive script was accessed and how corresponding beliefs, and, subsequently, behavioural scripts, were activated by conceptually similar current environmental cues. Thus, some offence related variables serve to provide a contextual backdrop against which current offence relevant stressors (i.e., a triggering event) are evaluated, and the response choice attached to this evaluation is subsequently employed. It appeared that the comparative evaluation engaged in as a response to a triggering event may be implicit or explicit. For many offenders, this process appeared to be almost automatic.

Other offence related variables, such as those related to substance use/misuse, may serve a slightly different purpose. One half of the sample of offenders reported experiencing black-outs as a result of excessive alcohol use *and* experienced a sense

of overwhelming rage while they were 'blacked-out'. Two participants reported that they had experienced a rage-related black-out without consuming alcohol, but stated that this was a rare occurrence. Alcohol seemed to lead to both increased physical aggression (hitting harder), and increased escalation time of aggression (get angrier more quickly) for all these offenders. When enraged, and in black-out mode, all these offenders reported being unable to control their behaviour, being unaware of their surroundings, and of their own behaviour (particularly the extent of damage they were inflicting).

Background Factors and Offence Related Variables were conceptualised as generally falling into two main groups: Common factors and Specific factors. Common factors were reported by all 12 participants (no differences were observed on the basis of offence type or ethnicity). Specific factors were, on the other hand, reported by only some of the participants, and as such trends on the basis of offence type and/or ethnicity were more readily apparent.

- *Common Factors*

Background and offence related variables reported by all 12 participants (six Maori and six Pakeha) were:

Parental Loss:

> *"My dad died when I was real young, I never knew him."*

Or

> *"My father was away at sea when I was a kid, he was never home, and by the time he was, I had left home. I feel like I never really knew him at all..."*

Poor Attachment to Primary Caregiver:

> *"My mum had a hard time from us kids, I was never home much, did my own thing from a real early age. No, I wouldn't say I was close to her, even growing up, I don't think any of us were... we weren't a close family."*

Conflict Resolution Skill Deficits:

> *"I don't know how to get the words out when I am that angry, they don't teach you that at school. It's easier just to hit."*

Empathy Deficits:

> *"I guess I felt sort of bad for a while, but it didn't last. It wasn't like he was hurt that bad, I only stabbed him below the waist..."*

Educational Failure; Truancy; Skill Deficits in Communication, Assertiveness and **Problem-solving; Antisocial** and **Anxious Personality Features; Proneness to Boredom** and **Cannabis Use.**

- *Specific Factors*

The purpose of analysing specific factor distribution was to identify the presence or absence of general trends, either across offence type groups, and/or across ethnicity groups. Therefore analysis has been restricted to presenting factors described consistently across all six offenders in each ethnicity based group or across all six, four or two offenders in each of the three offence type groups. Factors unable to be tagged as common to either ethnicity based groups or offence type groups (i.e., those merely *individually* specific to offenders) have not been presented based on the decision that detail at this level was outside the scope of this study.

It is important to keep in mind the small sample number used in this study when evaluating the ethnicity and offence type group differences presented below. It is possible that similarities and differences described by participants, and suggestive of trends, are less a function of group commonalities than of small sample size.

- **Ethnicity**

Factor distribution across offenders based on *ethnicity* revealed that beyond factors endorsed by all 12 offenders, only one variable was endorsed by *all Pakeha* offenders and this was **Affect Regulation as a Goal of Substance Use**:

> *"I was just so angry! I knew having a few drinks would mellow me out, you know?"*

The only two variables to be endorsed by *all Maori* offenders beyond the common variables were **Expulsion/Suspension from School** and **Young Age at Commencement of Offending.**

Six variables were restricted to one ethnicity. **Offending Related to Gang Membership** was reported by three *Maori* offenders but by no Pakeha offenders. **Medical Complications due to Substance Use** was restricted to two *Pakeha* offenders, and **Negative Evaluation of the Ability to Implement Positive Lifestyle Changes in the Future**:

> *"Yeah. I'd like things to be different when I get out. But it won't be. I have a record, no one is exactly going to give me a job, are they? I guess it's probably easier to go back to what I know..."*

was described by two *Pakeha* offenders and by no Maori offenders. The only other variable restricted to *Pakeha* offenders was **Excessive Sensitivity to Criticism**:

> *"I know I get a bit too, I don't know, sort of uptight, I guess, People know I get a bit heated if they criticise me, well, my friends do and that, so most of them don't."*

<u>*Maori*</u> offenders reported comparatively more:

Narcissistic Features:

"I really only bother talking to other intelligent people, you know, it's a waste of my time even trying to communicate with most of the people in here, they are just not on the same wavelength."

Escape and **Relaxation as Goals of Substance Use;**

"Smoking (cannabis) let's me just, I don't know, go off in my own little world..." AND *"It (smoking cannabis) mellows me out, makes me feel relaxed, it's good..."*

Previous Similar Triggers Experienced and **Previous Similar Incidents Experienced:**

"It's a hazard of the job, sometimes people don't pay. You just go around there with a baseball bat and deal with it, go collecting. Just part of the lifestyle I guess, you get used to it."

Offending Related to Self Esteem:

"I'm good at it. People respect me for it, and that makes me feel good."

Satisfaction with Criminal Lifestyle:

"Why would I want to change anything? I make heaps of money, get to do what I want all day, it's great!"

Motivated Attitude to Lifestyle Changes in the Future:

"I want to change when I get out. I definitely don't want to come back here again, that's for sure. Get a job, have a family...a normal life."

Offending Related to Affect Regulation; Peer Pressure to Begin Offending; Alcohol as a Precursor to Offending; Parental Cannabis Use; Short-Lived Remorse in Relation to Offending; Lack of Full Time Employment; Tendency to Voluntarily Quit Employment; Dismissive and **Fearful Attachment Styles; Childhood Physical Abuse; Childhood Emotional Abuse** and **Impulsivity.**

Pakeha offenders reported comparatively more: **Chaotic Home-Lives:**

> *"Mum and dad were always partying and drinking, you know, and sleeping around on each other. There were always loads of people around the place. She (mum) wasn't really the kind to make your school lunch! Half the time she wasn't even there, she used to take off for weeks at a time..."*

Avoidant Personality Features:

> *Oh, I might look like I am listening, but I am not really! It's just easier that way, otherwise you have to deal with a whole lot of shit, and that's just not me."*

Irresponsible Attitudes towards Others:

> *"Well, if they're not happy, they can deal with it. Why is it my problem? I do what want, when I want, and she knows where the door is if she doesn't like it..."*

Substance Use to Related to Affect Regulation:

> *"Having a few drinks makes me feel happy, you know, in party-mode, cruising. Even when it's been a shit day, in fact, especially if it's been a shit day!"*

Callous Attitude:

> *"Everyone was screaming and carrying on, it was ridiculous! They all knew what was going to happen, and then when it did (stabbing a man in the middle of a party) they all freaked out. It made me want to laugh, actually."*

Rigid Attitude:

> *"It's not a question of making it up. It's too late. They knew the rules, and now it's too late, they'll cop it. Apologising is all fine and dandy but it doesn't change anything, rules are rules."*

Reported Feelings of Remorse Related to Offending:

> *"I feel bad it ever got to anything like all that. He had a family, you know, a sister, and a mother..."*

Dissatisfaction with Criminal Lifestyle:

> *"I don't want to go out and do the same things all over again. It's a thug's life, really. I've changed, I don't want that anymore."*

Attention and Concentration Problems; Voluntary Quitting of Employment; Use of Hard Drugs; and Hard Drugs as a Precursor to Offending; Dependence on Alcohol; Dependence on Cannabis; Parental Alcohol Use; Tendency to be a Loner; Previous Prison Terms and **Financial Benefits Related to Offending.**

Perhaps as a function of the larger participant numbers in the GBH/Assault group (six compared to four in the Aggravated Robbery group and two in the Manslaughter/Murder group), the data suggested that ethnicity based variance was more pronounced in this group. In other words, Maori and Pakeha offenders were

more evenly matched, on more variables, in the Aggravated Robbery and Manslaughter/Murder groups.

- **Offence Type**

The factors that varied across offenders were distributed across *offence type* groups as follows:

GBH/Assault Offenders

Factors reported *consistently* by all six GBH/Assault offenders were:

Paranoid Personality Features:

> *"I don't trust anyone, really. You don't in this lifestyle. Most people will do you over if you give them a chance."*

Alcohol Related Black-Out's:

> *"It's like a hazy, sort of. You don't even hear if people are yelling at you. When you snap out of it, five or ten minutes can have gone by, but you can't remember them..."*

Intimacy Problems:

> *"I don't believe in love, anyway. You just get fucked over by them (women), in the end. Easier not to bother."*

Economic Hardship in Childhood; Expulsion from School; Regular Use of Alcohol; Relaxation as a Goal of Substance Use; Alcohol and Cannabis as Precursors to Offending; Previous Similar Offence Triggers; Being a Loner; and Rigid Attitude.

Trends

Two sets of two offenders in this group tended to endorse similar variables consistently, beyond those that all six of these participants reported.

Both offenders in the first set, one Maori and one Pakeha, described perfectionistic, aggressive/sadistic and narcissistic features, both were picked on at school, have a history of sporadic full time employment, showed dismissive attachment styles, use of hard drugs, dependence on alcohol, irresponsible attitudes toward others, reported feeling no remorse for their offending, had previously been in prison, started offending at a young age, felt that financial benefits were related to their offending, described callous attitudes, and reported feeling satisfied with their criminal lifestyle.

Both offenders in the second set (both Pakeha) described impulsive features, reported excessive sensitivity to criticism, described attention and concentration problems, showed a pre-occupied attachment style, reported dependence on alcohol, dependence on cannabis, and increased aggression related to alcohol. Both used substances to regulate affect, and reported parental alcohol use. Both described irresponsible attitudes toward others, negative previous interpersonal experiences, and reported that their remorse for offending behaviour was short-lived. Both had previously spent time in prison, felt offending behaviour provided them with self esteem benefits, used offending to regulate affect, described dissatisfaction with their criminal lifestyle and both reported an unstable and negative sense of self.

Aggravated Robbery Offenders

Factors reported consistently by all four Aggravated Robbery offenders were:

Chaotic Home-life; Attention and Concentration Problems; Educational Courses Attended; Use of Hard Drugs (cocaine, heroin, morphine, LSD, methadone); Use of Substances to Regulate Affect; Young Age when Commenced Offending and **Financial Benefits to Offending.**

Offending to Support Substance Use:

"I wanted the money for drugs, to buy drugs.... That's why I did it."

Offending Related to an 'Adrenaline Rush':

"I really wanted a rush, I kept thinking I wanted a rush...I didn't want to go back to the heroin...."

Trends

Two offenders in this group (one Pakeha and one Maori) tended to describe similar background and offence related variables, over and above the factors identified above as those consistent for all offenders in this group. Both experienced emotional and physical abuse in addition to harsh, inconsistent discipline in childhood, endorsed impulsivity, passive aggressive and avoidant features, reported a dependence on alcohol, experienced black-out's, reported that alcohol increased their aggression, reported that alcohol , hard drugs and cannabis were a precursors to their offending, and reported a dependency on all three substance types. They also both reported experiencing similar triggers and similar incidents in the past, and both have served previous prison terms, use offending to regulate their affect, and report being loners.

Manslaughter/Murder Offenders

Factors reported consistently by both Manslaughter/Murder offenders were:

Unstable and Negative Sense of Self:

"I am up and down a lot, especially in here. Sometimes I think I must just be bad, you know, to do what I did, but then I think about what he did, and I think it wouldn't have happened if he hadn't forced it. But I've wrecked my family over this, my wife is just devastated, my kids....I don't know, it's hard

sometimes to work out who the bad guy is. Some days it's just him, other days both of us....it's hard to face my family, that's for sure...."

Physical Abuse in Childhood; Harsh and Inconsistent Discipline in Childhood; Chaotic Home-life; Economic Hardship; Attention and Concentration Problems; Fired from Employment; Regular Use of Hard Drugs; Dependence on Cannabis; Relaxation as a Goal of Substance Use; Affect Regulation as a Goal of Substance Use; Escape as a Goal of Substance Use; Cannabis as a Precursor to Offending; Hard Drugs as a Precursor to Offending; Parental Alcohol Use During Childhood; Irresponsible Attitude Towards Others; Young Age when Commenced Offending; Affect Regulation as a Goal of Offending; Positive Attitude to Lifestyle Change in Future and **Rigid Attitude.**

Trends

No trends are evident for this group, given that the total sample is restricted to two participants. This may also have had some bearing on the large number of commonly described factors for this offence type group.

PROXIMAL MOOD

The category Proximal Mood is influenced by both the variables in Background Factors and those in Offence Related Variables. Both the distal and more proximal factors and vulnerabilities described in the above two categories combined with very recent environmental stressors (i.e., gang 'warfare' or relationship difficulties) to determine an offender's proximal mood in the hours prior to offence commission. This proximal mood may be divided into two general categories:

- *Positive :*

"We were starting to party, and everybody was feeling good..."

And

- *Negative:*

> *"I wanted to leave, I didn't want to be that close to her after what happened with the rehab thing, she should have stood by me and she didn't, I was angry with her."*

Clearly, the categories in the ***Situational Context*** phase are intended to capture the prominent influences, particularly affective state, operating at the time a triggering event is experienced.

Phase II: Justification

The first category in phase two is Triggering Event (see Figure 3.4). As mentioned in the description of phase one, the offender's proximal mood had significant bearing upon how a triggering event was Labelled as a result of Comparative Evaluation.

TRIGGERING EVENT

At the time the triggering event was experienced by the offender, he compared this to variables specifically related to offending (e.g., previous similar triggers or previous similar incidents) which guided his appraisal of the current triggering event. The comparative evaluation served to help the offender place the triggering event within a contextual framework, so that he was able to assign a label, or labels, to the event.

LABELLING

The first label, *Unmet Expectation,* describes a variety of triggering events, and was appropriate to event appraisals made by offenders in all three offence-type groups Rule violations - both sub-cultural *(criminal or gang culture)* rule violations, and personal rule violations - belong to this category:

> *"They had ripped me off, simple. Rip me off and you are going to get it."*

The label *Threat to Image* subsumes two different types of image related threats; the first is a threat to one's image as it is perceived by others:

> *"Yeah...people were laughing at me, and saying 'you weak mongrel, why haven't you dealt him out yet?' Like they were saying, you know, 'You let him put you in jail and you still haven't backed up on it!'."*

The second is a threat to one's self-image:

> *"He called me an idiot. The way I see it, the word is what they are calling me, and 'idiot' means you are useless. Which I am not. So I got angry."*

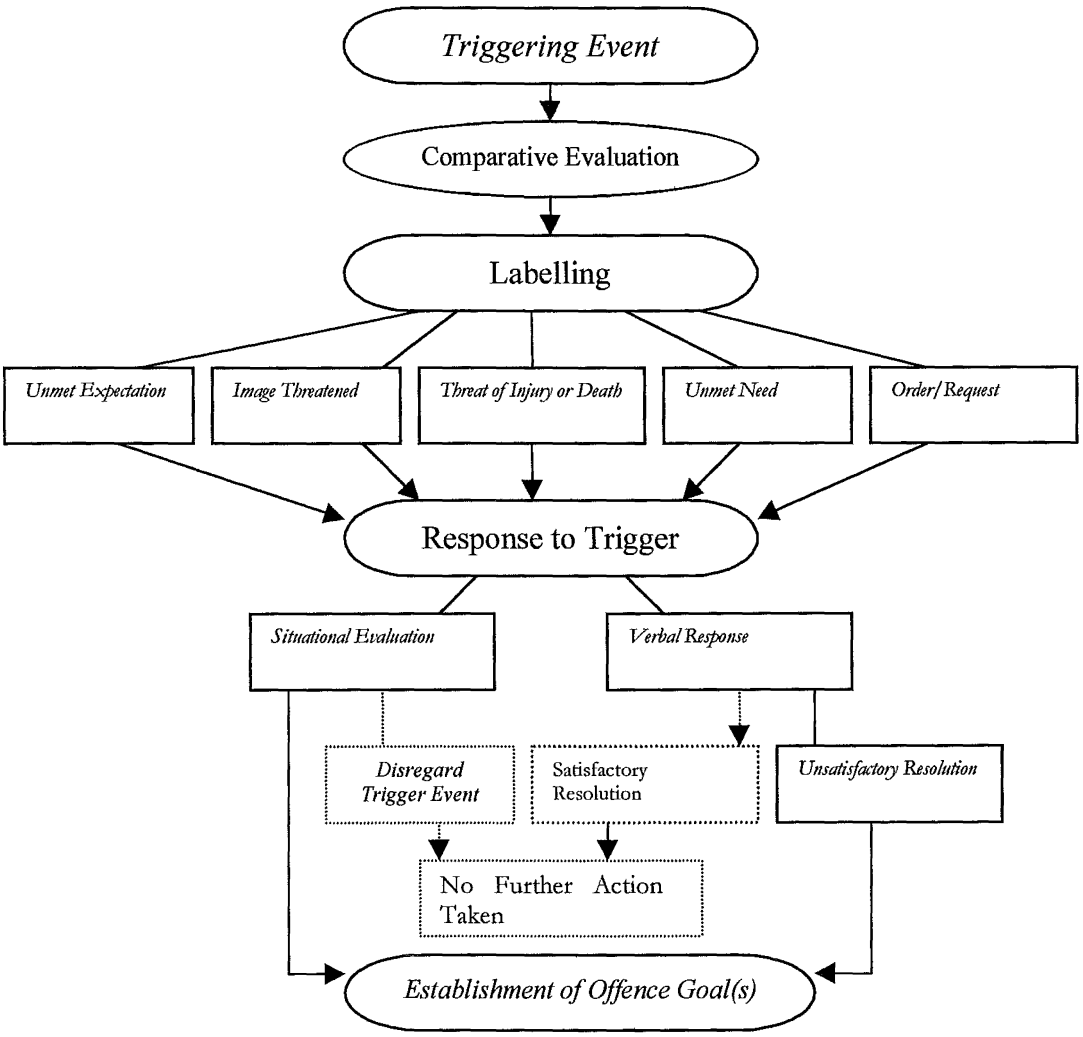


Figure 3.4. Phase II: Justification

The *Threat to Image* label was appropriate to meanings applied to triggering events by all three groups of offence type offenders.

A third label, *Threat of Injury or Death*, was applicable to one participant, the offender convicted for manslaughter:

> *"He came running at me, raised the gun and then I heard the click and saw him looking at it, sort of in surprise, you know? I realised the thing had jammed, but he was in the process of raising his hand to fix it, so I lifted my gun and shot him."*

The *Unmet Need* label was applicable to Aggravated Robbery offenders only. An awareness of some need that remains unmet, or unfulfilled, is described by this label:

> *"It was annoying me, I had no money in my wallet. I was used to having at least $500.00 in my pocket. I also hadn't had a rush, and I remembered the story about the guy in the States, that my friend had told me, and then I kept thinking that I wanted a rush and I didn't want to go back to heroin."*

Lastly, the label *Order/Request*, as the name implies, refers to a triggering event that takes the form of an order (such as in a gang environment) or a request (e.g., from a friend) to perform some type of action:

> *"He came and asked me if I could give him a hand. I said 'No problem, let's go!"*

Following the labelling of the triggering event, a Response is initiated.

RESPONSE

The meaning applied to the event, coupled with the offender's proximal mood, inform his response choice. Some offenders, those with relatively positive proximal

mood, opted for a *Verbal Response*, the purpose of which was identified as 'giving the guy a chance':

> *"I said 'Where is my money?' and he rattled off a whole lot of bullshit. I knew he was lying, he had no intention of paying me at all."*

An unsatisfactory solution to a verbal response meant that offence goals were established, and Phase III was commenced. Hypothetically, however, a satisfactory resolution as a result of a verbal response may have led to a termination of offence chain progression. A second possible response option was *Situational Evaluation*, which referred to the offender, often implicitly, evaluating his proximal mood, the meaning he had attached to the triggering event, the environment in which the event took place, and, for three of the offenders in this sample, the consequences of further action. Based on this evaluation, the offender subsequently made a decision to establish an offence related goal, or goals. Hypothetically, a situational evaluation too may be construed as an exit point in the offence chain, where, for example, an offender makes a decision to disregard the triggering event and the offence chain progression is halted.

Affective State in Phase II.

The influence of affective state during this phase is most important. A generally positive (flat, middle or energised) mood appeared, in some cases at least, to act as a diluting factor; that is, if experiencing a positive proximal mood at the time of the triggering event, it was more likely that an offender would offer a verbal response (with its accompanying option for a satisfactory solution) in Phase II, before moving on to goal formation. As such, a positive affective state in this phase may be construed as a protective factor. Negative affective states (particularly energised-negative) appeared to have some bearing on the appraisal (comparative evaluation) of the triggering event. When the affective state surrounding the triggering event occurrence was negative, comparative evaluation appeared to be more emotionally, than cognitively, driven. Additionally, during situational evaluation in the response

stage, negative mood appeared to lead to environmental cues being perceived as less ambiguous, more threatening, and more personally meaningful.

Phase III: Goal Formation

With activation of the Establishment of Offence Goal(s) category, the third phase of the model is commenced (see Figure 3.5.). In this phase, also, a Labelling process was identified. Offenders relied on the meaning they had given to the triggering event to inform the process of appropriate goal selection. Goals tended to fit into three main domains: *Redress Harm Goals, Demonstrate Loyalty Goals,* and *Meet Need Goals.* Both the first and last of these three domains are further divided into two, more specific, subcategories – *Punishment* and *Restore Image* goals, and *Self-Advancement* and *Self-Preservation* goals, respectively (see Figure 3.5.).

ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFENCE GOAL(S)

Because the goal establishment phase is based on the meaning, and the subsequent label assigned to a triggering event in phase two, a similar distribution across offence type groups was evident in phase three. All three offender type groups were represented in choosing at least one *Redress Harm Goal*, either *Punishment*:

> *"I'll teach him for trying to interfere in things that have nothing to do with him."*

or *Restore Image*:

> *"Beating the shit out of both of him would show them both I'm not to be messed with, you know..."*

Aggravated Robbery offenders over-represented in *Meet Need – Self Advancement* goals (the needs were identified as being money, and an 'adrenaline rush' in this

sample):

> *"One of my main reasons for doing it was to get the money to leave."*

However, the Manslaughter offender also established a *Meet Need* goal, although his was identified as a *Self-Preservation* goal in response to his assignment of a *Threat of Injury or Death* meaning to his triggering event:

> *"I decided, right then, that it was him or me. If I hadn't done something it would have been me dead on the ground, not him."*

The *Demonstrate Loyalty* goal is illustrated by the following narrative example:

> *'I guess I am just a good friend. He needed help, so I helped him."*

DISTAL GOAL RELATED PLANNING

Establishment of offence goals occurred in the context of either victim/target presence, or victim/target absence. Where the victim or target was present, the offender moved straight to ***Phase IV: Preparation***, however, where goal formation occurred in the absence of a victim or a target, some degree of Distal Goal Related Planning was, by logical inference, required. Two subcategories of distal planning were described; *Organisational Planning* and *Performance Planning*. Both fall on parallel dimensions, *Degree of Planning* and *Temporal Activation.* Organisational planning also falls on an additional continuum; *Temporal Planning.*

- *Organisational Planning*

Organisational planning referred to all planning associated with setting up the performance behaviour (i.e., creating an opportunity, waiting for a spontaneous opportunity), and managing the situation after completion of the performance (leaving the scene, avoiding detection, post-performance destination). It may be conceptualised as the 'how' planning of offence behaviour; how to obtain access to the victim, how to ensure a successful get-a way. All offenders engaged in some

degree of organisational planning when the offence goal was formed in the absence of a victim or target. Differentiation between offenders in this stage was based on the *degree of planning* engaged in by the participant. Thus, an offender who decided to wait for an appropriate opportunity to arise was said to engage in minimal organisational planning. An offender who planned how he would get to and from the offence performance location was said to engage in moderate organisational planning, and an offender who 'scoped-out' the location, organised required performance 'tools' (such as a balaclava), and planned an escape route, was said to have engaged in maximal organisational planning.

Offenders also differed on a *temporal planning* dimension, some began organisational planning immediately, others delayed this planning for up to one week after goal establishment. Lastly, participants differed on an *activation* dimension; with some activating their distal organisational plan immediately (i.e., they began setting up an opportunity for performance behaviour by asking others where they would be able to find the victim), while others delayed activating their plan until closer to the performance behaviour stage (i.e., they established their goal, but did not plan how to go about obtaining required 'tools' until some days later, and finally activated this plan by visiting their friend and obtaining an untraceable sawn-off shot gun, some time later again).

- *Performance Planning*

Performance planning refers to planning with regard to the actual offence behaviour (stabbing, shooting, hitting). This type of planning may be conceptualised as the 'what' planning of the offence performance; what to do when access to the victim or target has been successfully obtained (i.e., 'just beat him up', 'hit him, and kick him a few times', 'stab him in the leg because this is where it hurts the most so if he is lying I will soon know'). Again, degree of planning (from none to maximal, as illustrated in the above example) was noted to differ across offenders, as did the temporal aspect of their *planning* (begin planning immediately after goal establishment to delayed by up to one week).

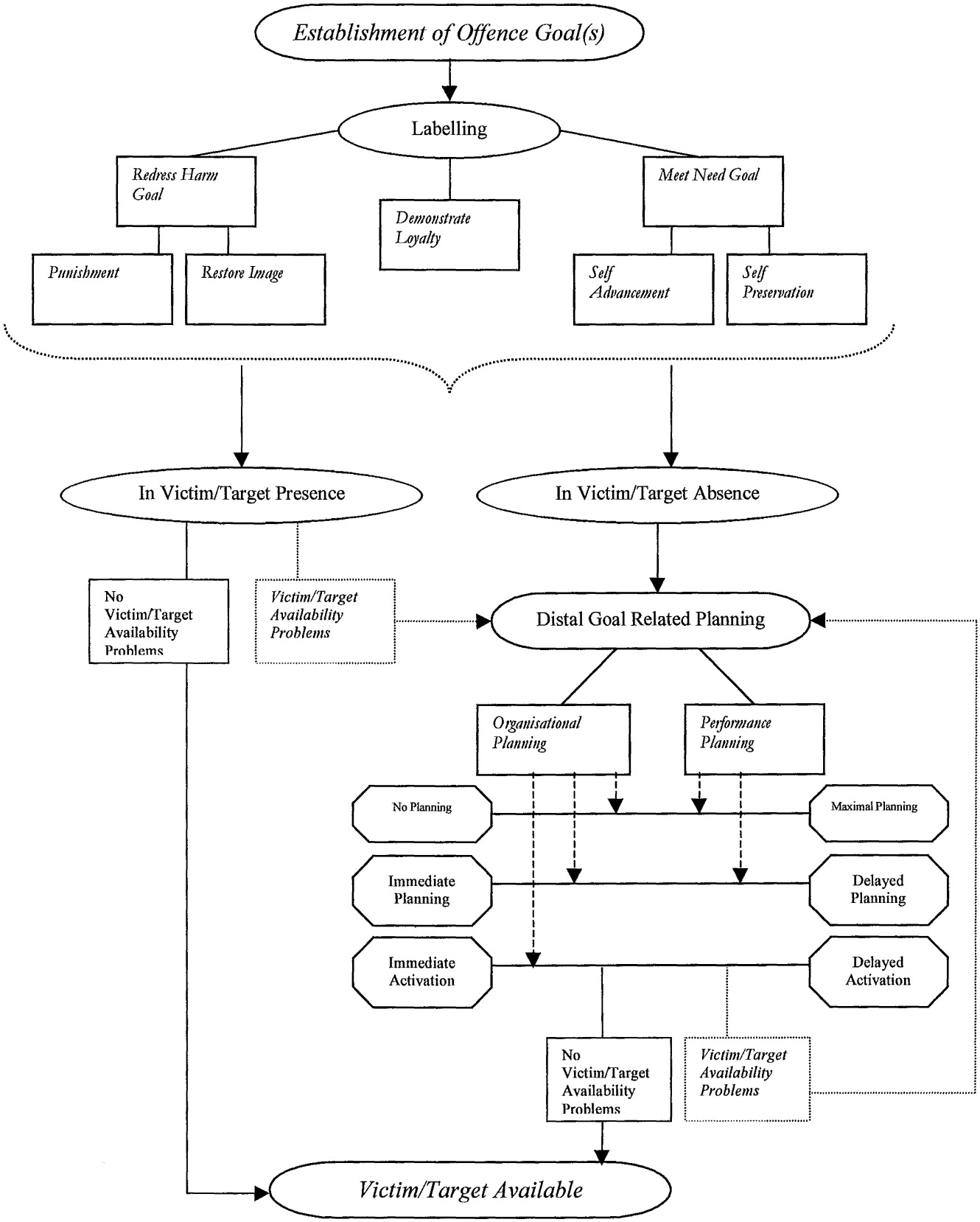


Figure 3.5. Phase III: Goal Formation

Unlike organisational planning, performance planning was not a necessary outcome of goal establishment in the absence of a victim or a target. Some offenders exhibiting no distal performance planning at all, instead engaging in planning surrounding the 'what' of their performance behaviour more proximally to offence performance (in ***Phase III: Preparation***). Others engaged in distal performance planning in addition to distal organisational planning. By default, temporal *activation* is not an issue for this type of planning, as activation of 'what' planning is restricted to the offence performance stage in Phase IV.

In the research sample, no problems were encountered by any of the participants in obtaining access to their victim or target and thus reaching the Victim/Target Available stage in ***Phase III: Preparation***. However, some participants, in relating experiences not classed as the index offence (during the conflict resolution discussion in the interview) identified various possible options that were available, and could have been, or were, utilised by them when difficulties were encountered that restricted or inhibited access to their victim or target. These options have not been graphically represented in the model's phase development as they did not relate directly to the index offence. However, because they were volunteered by offenders, they are briefly outlined below.

Victim/Target Unavailability Strategies

It appeared that offenders tended to return to the distal organisational planning stage when problems of this type were encountered. Three main options were identified as plausible responses to this situation: *Abandon or Postpone the Offence Process*; *Locate the Victim or Target*; and *Substitute a Victim or Target*. Both of the latter two options, if successful, returned the offender to the Victim/Target Available stage of the offence process. The former option, abandonment or postponement of goal achievement resulted in an exit from the offence process.

Affective State in Phase III.

During the ***Goal Formation*** phase, affective states tended to vary greatly across offenders. The type of goal(s) established, while predominantly reliant on the label attached to the trigger event in the previous phase, was also influenced by affective state. This was most obvious where energised-negative affect led to establishment of multiple goals:

> *"The point was to make sure everyone else knew not to think they could start ripping me off* (Restore Image Goal)*....but I have to admit, when he started lying, that made me angrier and angrier, he was just making it worse for himself, in the end, because then it became a personal thing as well, you know."* (Punishment Goal)

Phase IV: Preparation

The preparation phase commenced when the Victim/Target Available stage was reached.

VICTIM/TARGET AVAILABLE

Immediately following successful victim or target access participants described a stage termed Proximal Goal Related Planning which fed into the first link of the next, ***Offence Performance***, phase. Thus, proximal goal related planning takes place immediately prior to offence performance, but after access to the victim or target has been secured.

PROXIMAL GOAL RELATED PLANNING

Three options were suggested by the data to flow from the second link in this phase: *Proximal Performance Plan Development; Refinement of Distal Performance Plan; and Distal Performance Plan Activation* (see Figure 3.6.).

- *Development of Proximal Performance Plan*

Clearly, those offenders who did not engage in any distal performance planning, which included all offenders for whom goal establishment occurred in the context of victim/target presence, did not (could not) activate or refine their distal performance plan. Thus, they either engaged in some degree of proximal planning, or proceeded immediately to the first link in ***Phase V: Offence Performance.***

Proximal performance planning differed across offenders according to the degree of planning exhibited. Data suggested proximal performance planning ranged from minimal:

> *"I thought, 'I'm gonna go in there and front the mongrel'."*

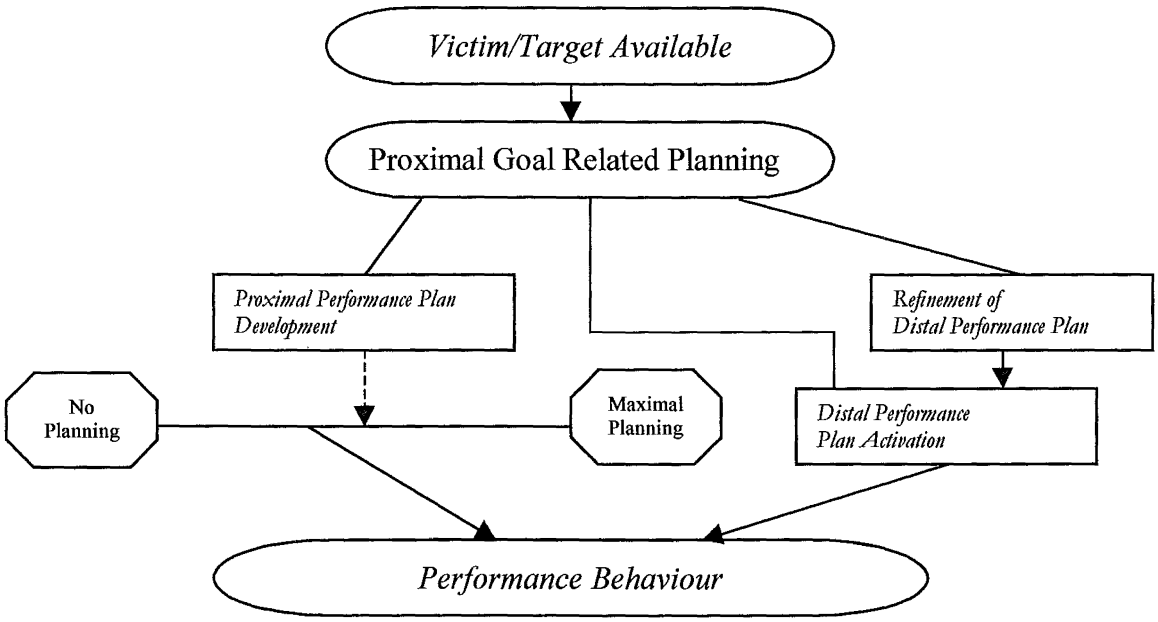


Figure 3.6. Phase IV: Preparation

To more detailed:

"I decided I would smack him out, and then I realised I was wearing my work boots, so I thought I might give him a kicking as well, they have steel caps, so ...it was lucky I had them on."

Offenders who fell at the extreme (No Planning) end of the proximal planning dimension tended to be those for whom goal establishment occurred in the presence of the victim or target, and where the escalation of the offence process was rapid, leaving little time to plan. Functioning for this type of offender tended to be automatic and seemed reliant on behavioural scripts, without apparent cognitive evaluation or explicit planning:

'I didn't really think about what to do, he said it and I just bashed him."

- *Refinement And Activation of Distal Performance Plan*

Those offenders with a distally developed performance plan appeared to either activate this plan without applying further refinement or changes:

I knew they were at a party, so when I got there, I just walked up to him and did it, no different from what I had expected."

Or made changes to the distal plan in order to achieve a better performance plan-environment fit:

"I was going to go in and kick him, but then when I got in there, there was no room for me, and I decided to stab him instead."

Affective State in Phase IV.

Here again, negative mood states, particularly energised-negative mood, impacted upon the degree of planning carried out by the offenders. Planning appeared to fall at the none/minimal end for participants who described feeling 'enraged' or 'very angry' during this phase. Those offenders who planned more effectively generally reported flat-negative, or flat-positive affective states, and those who described

middle-positive or middle-negative mood states (adrenalised and anxious/panicky, respectively) also tended to plan less efficiently.

Phase V: Offence Performance

This phase describes the commission of the actual violent behaviour. Three stages or subcategories form the links in this phase: Performance Behaviour, Progress evaluation, and Performance Termination.

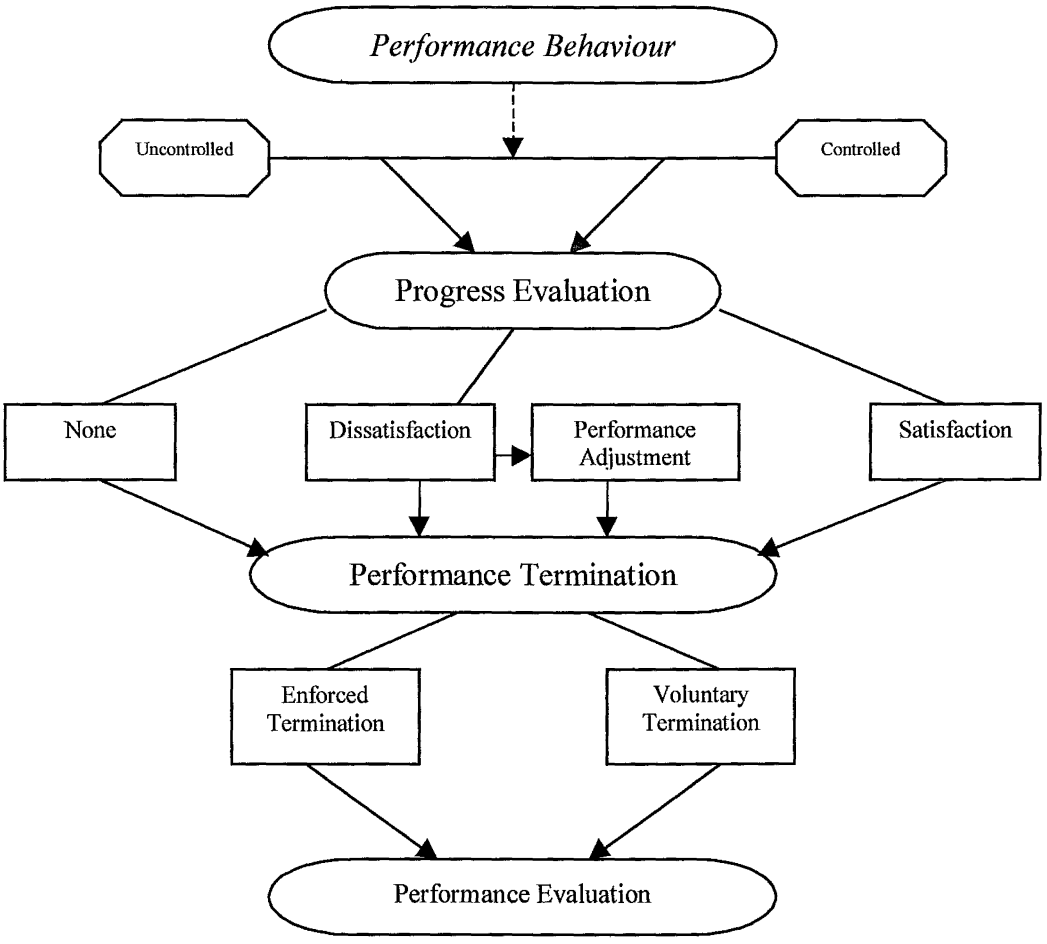


Figure 3.7. Phase V: Offence Performance

PERFORMANCE BEHAVIOUR

This stage, specifically, describes the act of violence perpetrated by the offenders. It appeared from the data that behaviour in this category could be dimensionalised as ranging from *Uncontrolled* to *Controlled* (see Figure 3.7.).

- *Uncontrolled Performance Behaviour*

Performance behaviour was classified as uncontrolled when little or no self-control, was described by the offender:

> *"I felt in, like in a frenzy." OR "It was like seeing red, really, I couldn't hear anyone or even see anything except him, it felt like, it was a rage feeling, absolute rage."*

- *Controlled Performance Behaviour*

Controlled offence performance behaviour, on the other hand, is illustrated by the following quote:

> *"No, I was clinical, precise. I always am in the middle of it, I calm everything down, slow my heart rate down, and it stays like that until it is finished."*

PROGRESS EVALUATION

The progress evaluation category was described by only some of the participants. The purpose of this link in the offence chain appeared to be aimed at termination of the violent behaviour or act. Thus, checking performance behaviour during the commission of the act either confirmed or disconfirmed to the offender that the performance behaviour had achieved its desired outcome and could be terminated:

> *"I had done about three I think. I wanted to stab him more than once. Once would not have taught him, but I didn't want to kill him, either, so after some more, about seven times, I stopped and moved on to the next guy."*

If the performance behaviour was judged to be a failure with regard to achieving desired outcome, behaviour was, by some offenders, adjusted (as in the above example, where this offender decided after three stabbings that more were required and after seven decided that he had achieved his desired outcome).

Progress evaluations with a 'satisfaction' rating, as well as those with a 'dissatisfaction' rating and possible, but not necessarily associated, adjustment in performance and a lack of evaluation, all led the offender into the final category in this phase Performance Termination.

PERFORMANCE TERMINATION

Termination of the performance behaviour took two forms; *Voluntary* or *Enforced*

termination. Both options flowed into the first link of ***Phase VI: Post-Offence Performance.***

- *Voluntary Termination*

Voluntary termination was behaviour engaged in by the offender *at his instigation*,

such as walking away, which effectively ended the performance stage.

- *Enforced Termination*

Enforced termination refers to situations where the offender did not voluntarily disengage from offence performance behaviour and had to be forced into ending the performance stage. This generally took the form of mandatory removal, by a friend or other 'friendly' individual, of the offender away from the victim. A alternative

scenario was enforced termination of the performance behaviour as a result of interference from 'unfriendly' individuals such strangers:

"I had to leave because a car was pulling up, but I wasn't finished yet."

Alternatively, an offender could be apprehended by police. This is a hypothetical alternative, not reported by participants within the context of discussing their index offence, but was alluded to as having been experienced by three offenders on other occasions.

Affective State in Phase V.

It appeared from the data that an energised- negative mood state tended to associate with uncontrolled performance behaviour. Secondly, uncontrolled performance and energised-negative affect tended to lead to a lack of progress evaluation and enforced termination. Flat intensity, either positive or negative, appeared to link to voluntary termination, while energised-positive mood did for offenders link to enforced termination. Middle-positive (adrenalised states) also tended to lead to enforced termination.

Post-Offence Performance

The last phase in the offence process pertains to stages that follow the performance of the violent behaviour or act. Five categories were evident from the data: Performance Evaluation, Post-Offence Performance Behaviour, Goal Achievement Evaluation, Offence Satisfaction Evaluation, and Probability of Re-offending (see Figure 3.8.).

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

This subcategory pertains to evaluation that takes place while the offender was still within the general environmental context of the performance behaviour, and the victim or target was still present. In other words, the offender had not yet left the scene at this stage.

Similar to progress evaluation, the predominant purpose of this stage was for the offender to decide whether or not the outcome of the performance behaviour stage was congruent with his expectations. Consequently, three subcategories pertain to this stage: *No Evaluation*, *Goal Outcome Incongruence*, and *Goal-Outcome Congruence*. The difference between this evaluation and the one in the previous phase is primarily temporal. While the progress evaluation was rapid and may be almost automatic, the performance evaluation was more explicit and less rushed, taking place as it does, outside of the immediate context of hitting, stabbing, robbing or other violent, physical behaviour. It is differentiated from subsequent evaluation stages in that the victim or target was still accessible to the offender at this stage.

- *No Evaluation*

Offenders who chose this option generally moved straight from performance termination to post-performance behaviour such as escape and detection avoidance, bypassing the option to decide whether they were satisfied or otherwise with the outcome of their behaviour in the performance stage.

- *Goal-Outcome Incongruence*

This subcategory was evidenced in the descriptions of offenders who felt that while they had, for example, stabbed their victim several time, they did feel that their victim had 'learned their lesson' (an evaluation based on continued victim defiance) and as such their Punishment Goal had not been adequately met and goal-outcome incongruence was noted. While an 'incongruence' rating hypothetically allows for offenders to choose to proximally establish further offence goals (in the presence of the victim/target) and re-enter the offence process at phase III, with rapid proximal performance plan development as a subsequent choice-point and further performance behaviour as a result, none of the offenders in this research took this option, moving instead to the Post-Performance Behaviour stage.

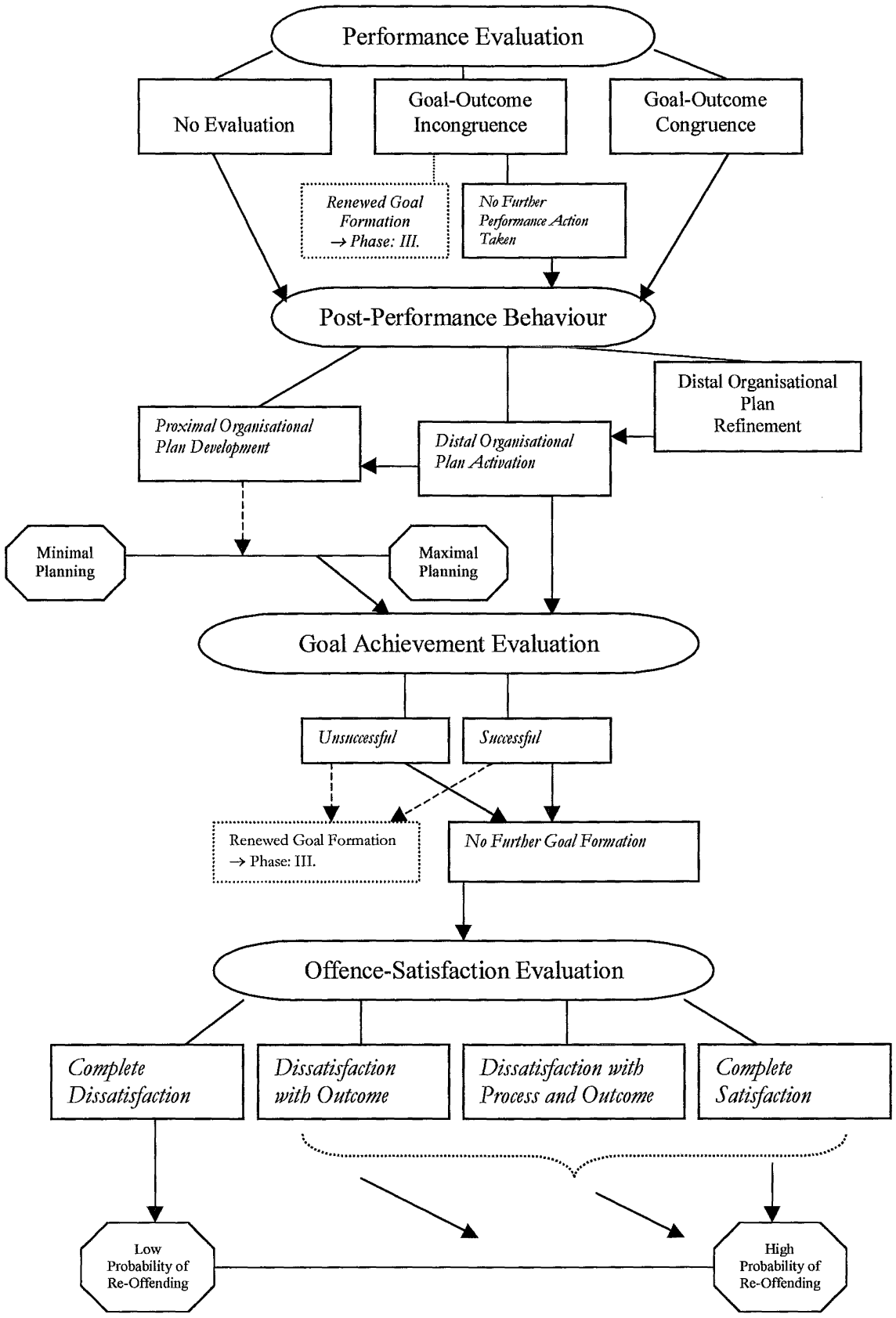


Figure 3.8. Phase VI: Post-Performance

- *Goal-Outcome Congruence*

As the name implies, this stage was described by offenders who evaluated the situation and who then decided that their goal had been substantiated by the outcome of the performance behaviour and therefore moved on to the Post-Performance Behaviour stage.

Affective State in Phase VI.

Offenders who reported energised-negative affect tended to forego performance evaluation. It is hypothetically plausible that offenders who report goal-outcome incongruence, *and* who are in an energised state (negative or positive) are perhaps more likely than flat intensity offenders to renew goal establishment (a feedback loop to phase III). In this sample, all offenders elected to forego renewed goal formation, however some offenders did report a highly energised affective state during offence performance . These same offenders tended to experience enforced performance termination, however, which may explain their ultimate progression through to post-performance behaviour (they were prevented from doing otherwise), rather than renewed goal formation, certainly some of the participants in this sample indicated that had they not been forcibly restrained they may not have terminated when they did.

POST- PERFORMANCE BEHAVIOUR

Included in this phase are behaviours, cognitions and affective states involved in the aftermath of the performance phase. It may be construed as pertaining to immediate situation management. The predominant concern appeared to be escape and detection avoidance, however post-performance environment in a more general sense was deemed to be the primary focus of this stage. Three choice points were reported by participants in relation to this category: *Proximal Organisational Plan Development*, *Distal Organisational Plan Refinement*, and *Distal Organisational Plan Activation.*

- *Development of Proximal Performance Plan*

Clearly, those offenders who did not engage in any distal organisational planning, did not (could not) activate or refine their distal organisational plan. Thus, they engaged in some degree of proximal (post-performance) organisational planning. Additionally, while many offenders had formed some type of distal organisational plan with respect to post-performance situation management, one activated this distal plan but found it inadequate:

> *"I hadn't thought past getting away from the scene really..."*

Which required this participant to subsequently engage in additional proximal plan development:

> *"...and as we were driving along I decided that I wanted to go to my mum's...so I got my mate to drop me off there."*

Proximal organisational planning differed across offenders according to the degree of planning exhibited. Data suggested proximal organisational planning ranged from minimal:

> *"I thought, 'we have to get the fuck out of here!"*

To more detailed:

> *"I knew I had to wipe my finger prints off the blade, so I did that and chucked the thing in the sink, then we ran out and on the way to the truck I decided that we better leave town for a while."*

Offenders who fell at the minimal end of the proximal planning dimension tended to be those who experience energised-negative, middle-positive (adrenalised) or energised-positive affective state during offence performance.

- *Refinement And Activation of Distal Performance Plan*

Those offenders with a distally developed organisational plan appeared to either activate this plan without applying further refinement or changes:

> *"I just got in the car and headed home..."*

Or made changes to the distal plan in order to achieve a better organisational plan-situational environment fit:

> *"I left and got on my bike, but then instead of taking time to hide the gun I just threw it over the fence out the back of the service station and then kept heading for home."*

Affective State in Phase VI.

Here again, negative mood states, particularly energised-negative mood, impacted upon the degree of planning carried out by the offenders. Those experiencing energised or middle intensity affect states (particularly energised-negative and middle-positive (adrenalised) states) tended to forego refining any distal plan they had, or, if they had formed no distal post-performance plan in earlier phases, planned proximally to very limited degree (i.e., thinking as far ahead as getting away from the immediate scene, but little beyond that).

GOAL ACHIEVEMENT EVALUATION

Two types of evaluation make up the last two categories in this final phase. Goal Achievement Evaluation may be conceptualised as the more *immediate* of the two, and occurred within approximately one hour of performance termination. Two choice points were evident here, *Unsuccessful Goal Achievement* and *Successful Goal Achievement.* Both flowed into the final evaluation stage for this sample of offenders, though a hypothetical feedback loop to phase III is a plausible alternative.

- *Unsuccessful Goal Achievement*

Where participants identified unsuccessful goal achievement, data indicated that, in hindsight, they did not feel that their primary goal had been adequately met. In some cases this meant that while some of the performance behaviour was deemed to have achieved a successful outcome, other aspects of the performance were felt to be lacking in some way. For example:

"The second guy got away, so I didn't totally get to do what I wanted."

All offenders in this sample chose to refrain from further or renewed goal establishment (a feedback loop to phase III), though the majority of the participants identified this as an option in hindsight.

- *Successful Goal Achievement*

As the name implies, successful goal achievement was indicated where offenders reported that they felt performance behaviour had adequately achieved a desired outcome with respect to meeting any goals they established at earlier phases. It is hypothetically possible that even where an offender has decided that goal achievement has been successful, further or renewed goal establishment (a feedback loop to phase III) is a possible option, perhaps in order to reinforce their position to the victim, or perhaps to include secondary victims or targets in the performance behaviour. All the offenders in this sample opted to move into the final link of the offence chain at this point, however.

OFFENCE SATISFACTION EVALUATION

The second to last stage in the final phase is another evaluative link. However, this evaluation stage is differentiated from previous ones by two primary aspects: by more global, or comprehensive, content matter, and by being temporally further removed from the performance behaviour. Evaluation in this phase focused on the entire offence process up to this point, thus, it included evaluation of **the response to**

the triggering event; **goal establishment**; **preparation, offence performance**; **performance evaluation**; **post-performance behaviour** and **goal achievement evaluation**. This stage generally occurred within three days to a week of offence performance termination, and rather than being limited to a dichotomous classification such as in the previous stage, this evaluation generated four subcategories, or 'satisfaction ratings': *Complete Satisfaction*, *Dissatisfaction with Outcome*, *Dissatisfaction with Process and Outcome*, and *Complete Dissatisfaction.*

- *Complete Satisfaction*

Clearly, this satisfaction rating indicates the offender reported total satisfaction with every phase of the offence chain:

> *"No hassles, did what I set out to do, it went off okay, so...fine."*

- *Dissatisfaction with Outcome*

Offenders who described this type of satisfaction rating identified that they were satisfied with their goal, and with the performance behaviour in general, however, they were not satisfied with outcome. Generally, offenders in this category would form the same goals, and enact similar performance behaviour, but would prefer the end result to be different:

> *"I don't feel shit about doing him, at least not in that I hit him or nothing, like I said, he shouldn't have poked his nose in my business, but I didn't mean to kill him. I feel sad about that."*

- *Dissatisfaction with Process and Outcome*

While still satisfied with the goal they established, offenders in this category were unhappy with the execution of the offence performance, and with their management of the immediate post-performance situation:

"Robbing the place was not the problem, it was basically badly planned, too fast, so we were unprepared for the problems. And getting caught wasn't great either!"

- *Complete Dissatisfaction*

Several participants reported complete and total dissatisfaction with the entire offence process, including the initial goal formation. These offenders tended to express remorse at the entire incident, and at least half of them explicitly established abstinence goals as a result of the outcome of this evaluative stage:

"I wish I had never done it. Any of it. I can't even watch armed robberies on T.V. these days because it upsets me, because of what happened to that girl. Never again.

PROBABILITY OF RE-OFFENDING

The last category in this final phase pertains to the probability that a participant may re-offend, based on his satisfaction rating in the previous category. A dimensionalised approach has been taken with regard to this stage, and a continuum ranging from low to high probability of offending represents this link.

- *Low Probability of Re-Offending*

As mentioned above, several of the offenders in the *Complete Dissatisfaction* subcategory explicitly formed abstinence goals with respect to future re-offending. It is important to note that in most cases, this abstinence goal was specific to the offence type described as their index offence, and was a not a global determination to abstain from all future violent offending behaviour. Nevertheless, those offenders who experienced complete dissatisfaction were judged more likely to fall at the low probability end of the re-offending continuum.

- *High Probability of re-Offending*

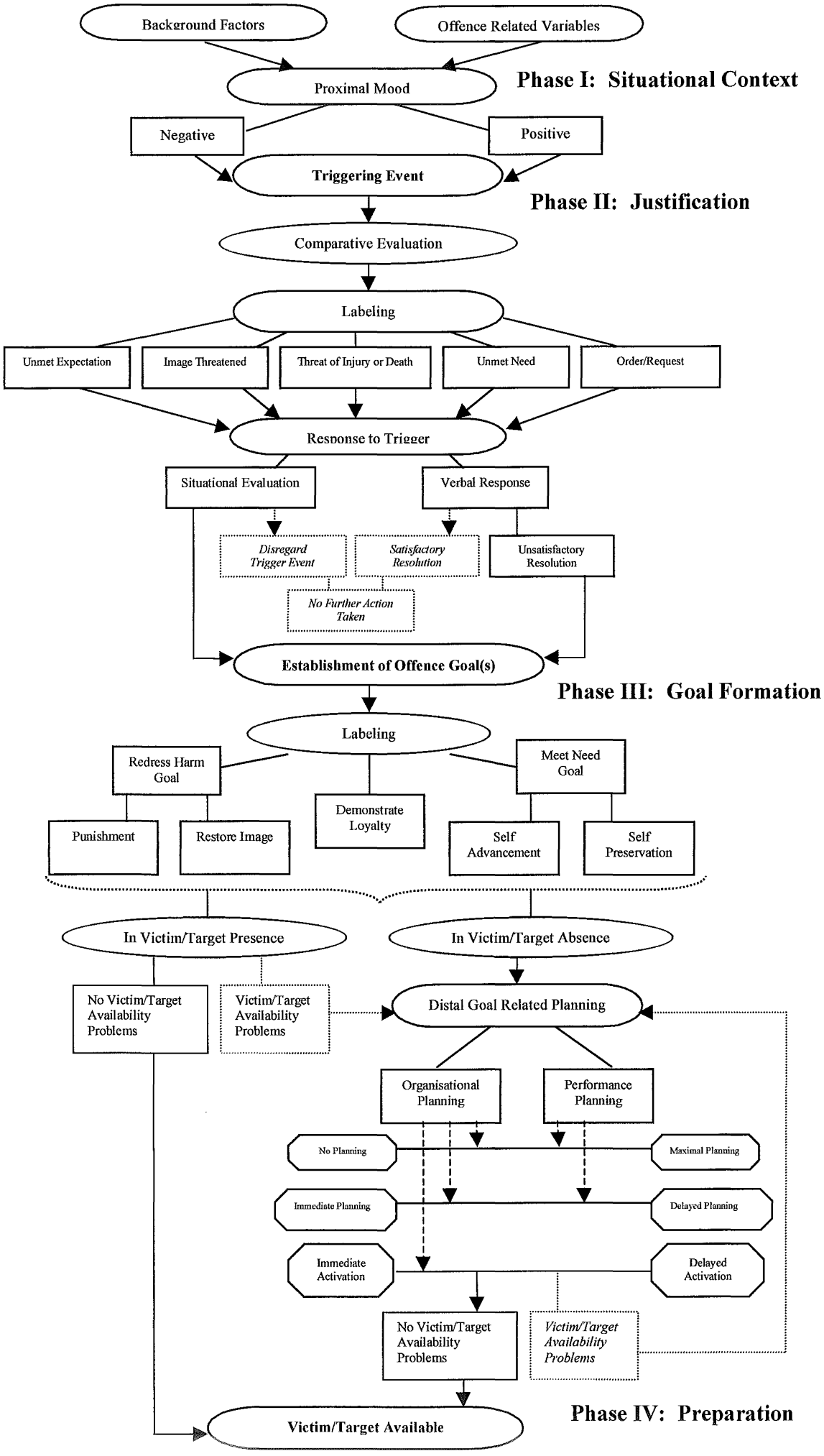
Most particularly applicable to those offenders who reported *Complete Satisfaction* with their offence process, but moderately so for those who reported partial satisfaction, this end of the continuum indicates a moderate to high likelihood that offenders may re-offend. As highlighted above, however, this re-offending probability is likely to be restricted to the offence type discussed as their index offence type, and does not necessarily suggest that these offenders have a high probability of engaging in any and all violent behaviour in the future, given that their complete or partial satisfaction rating is based upon a specific offence type and the process associated with that type of offence behaviour.

3.5 OFFENCE PATHWAYS

In this final section, a preliminary attempt has been made to track offenders through the model by way of specific pathways evident from their data.

The full model contains six phases, with 21 major categories. Of these seven do not have subcategories. This results in a total of 14 choice points, with between two and five subcategories in each (see Figure 3.9.). In order to analyse individual pathways, each offender's behaviour at each of the choice points was recorded. From here, identification of pathways was approached in three conceptually different ways; firstly on the basis of Ethnicity, secondly on the basis of Offence Type, and thirdly on the basis of Affect Regulation.

Individual records were grouped according to the frame of reference from which the pathway analysis was being carried out (i.e., ethnicity, offence type or affective regulation frameworks) and data was then plotted onto the full model to identify broad trends. Ethnicity and Offence Type, as organisational structures, yielded little in the way of theoretically informative trends. The approach using Affect as the underlying structure for data organisation, however, proved more useful: two


Background Factors
Offence Related Variables
Proximal Mood
Phase I: Situational Context
Negative
Positive
Triggering Event
Phase II: Justification
Comparative Evaluation
Labeling
Unmet Expectation
Image Threatened
Threat of Injury or Death
Unmet Need
Order/Request
Response to Trigger
Situational Evaluation
Verbal Response
Disregard Trigger Event
Satisfactory Resolution
Unsatisfactory Resolution
No Further Action Taken
Establishment of Offence Goal(s)
Phase III: Goal Formation
Labeling
Redress Harm Goal
Meet Need Goal
Demonstrate Loyalty
Punishment
Restore Image
Self Advancement
Self Preservation
In Victim/Target Presence
In Victim/Target Absence
No Victim/Target Availability Problems
Victim/Target Availability Problems
Distal Goal Related Planning
Organisational Planning
Performance Planning
No Planning
Maximal Planning
Immediate Planning
Delayed Planning
Immediate Activation
Delayed Activation
No Victim/Target Availability Problems
Victim/Target Availability Problems
Victim/Target Available
Phase IV: Preparation

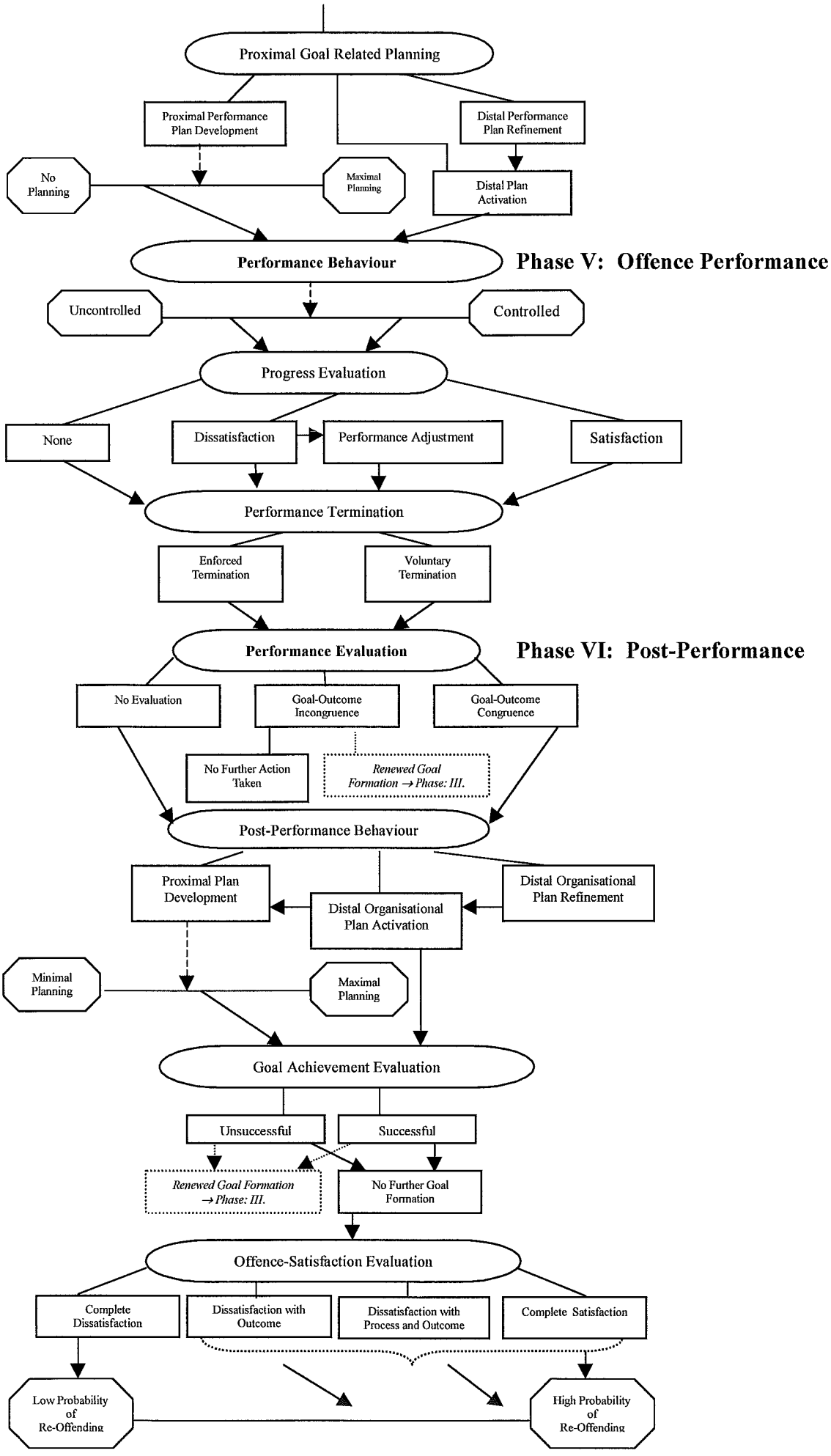


Figure 3.9. Comprehensive model depicting all major categories and subcategories

moderately robust pathways were identified. The following sections describe preliminary findings for all three frameworks.

It is important to underscore the small sample size used in this research. In order to efficiently and accurately discern pathways, a much larger sample is needed. However, if viewed within the context of this preliminary, indeed exploratory, study, the two tentative pathways identified using Affect Regulation as the defining variable do highlight possible directions for further, more elaborate, investigation.

Pathways Based on Ethnicity

The data showed very little variance on the basis of ethnicity between the Maori and Pakeha groups. Minor differences, based on a majority-rule, indicated that Maori offenders are more likely to choose Demonstration of Loyalty as an offence goal (possibly due to the larger number of Maori participants currently involved in gangs in this sample). Pakeha offenders tended to show less overall planning than Maori offenders, while Maori participants indicated less engagement in progress evaluation when compared with Pakeha participants. Overall, this approach did not prove useful in the identification of broad trends in any theoretically informative ways.

Pathways Based on Offence Type

As with an approach based on ethnicity, no robust, easily discernible trends were evident using the offence type approach. Particularly when Murder/Manslaughter and GBH/Assault offenders were compared, pathways through the model were not easily differentiated. However, differences were more readily apparent when Aggravated Robbery offenders were compared to both other types of offenders. Observations of note for this framework are outlined below.

General Observations for Offence Type Comparisons

The GBH/assault offenders, and the murder/manslaughter offenders, in general, tended to be more impulsive, and less well organised than aggravated robbery

participants. GBH/assault goals appeared to be more 'other' oriented, meaning Punishment and Restoration of Image goals were more common for this type of offender than meet Need goals. The reverse was true for aggravated robbery offenders. The majority of goals for GBH/assault offenders were formed in the absence of a victim, thus distal planning was a stage these offenders moved through. In this stage, their planning tended to be minimalistic rather than detailed, and was often commenced soon after goal establishment. Again, the reverse was true for aggravated robbery participants. Plans were also acted on more rapidly when compared with aggravated robbery offenders. Murder/manslaughter offenders both established their goals in the presence of their victims, and thus did not engage in any distal goal related planning.

Controlled and uncontrolled performance behaviour was evenly distributed for both GBH/assault and murder/manslaughter offenders (three each for the first, and one each for the second group). Progress evaluation was more likely to be bypassed than not for GBH/assault offenders, and was always bypassed for murder/manslaughter offenders, in contrast with aggravated robbery offenders, who all engaged in progress evaluation, and all adjusted their performance as a result of this. Most GBH/Assault offenders reported goal-outcome congruence, and then developed proximal post performance plans, usually to a limited degree, whereas aggravated robbery offenders tended to activate distally prepared post performance plans. Where aggravated robbery offenders did plan proximally, they did so to a more detailed degree. Of note is the observation that an overwhelming majority of GBH/Assault offenders described complete satisfaction with their offence process, and were much more likely to fall on or near the high probability of re-offending end on this continuum than either of the other two offence types. Aggravated robbery participants tended to report dissatisfaction with their offence processes, and tended to be placed on or near the low probability of re-offending end of this continuum.

Pathways Based on Affect Regulation

The decision to use Affect as an organising structure was partially based on the work currently emerging in the sex offending literature. Process model have been applied in this field with increasing success, and recent research in that area indicates that affect regulation may well play an important role in sex offence processes. Additionally, the lack of evidence for informative, at least theoretically informative, trends using the above two approaches indicated that offenders' progress through the model may not be a function of criminologically based factors such as offence type, or of culturally based variables, such as ethnicity. The differentiation between aggravated robbery participants and both of the other two offence types indicated that these offenders seemed more able to regulate their affect appropriately, and this also supported further investigation into this variable as a distinguishing factor.

AFFECTIVE PATHWAYS

Data organised by affect regulation revealed that those offenders with energised negative or middle-positive (adrenalised) affect at most phases of the model tended to be poor planners, often engaging in little or no distal planning, and where they had distally planned their behaviour, the activation of their planning was often immediate and usually remained unrefined in response to changing situational circumstances. The same offenders tended to show uncontrolled behaviour during offence performance, with resultant enforced termination. Moreover, they commonly described dissatisfaction with the outcome or both outcome and process associated with their offence chain. Background factors for these individuals indicated impulsive features, proneness to boredom, and attention/concentration difficulties.

Individuals displaying relatively moderate affective intensity, whether negative or positive, on the other hand, appeared to be more likely to efficiently plan behaviour in advance, activate readily available, pre-planned behaviour which was more often refined when the environment demanded behavioural adjustment. They exhibited more controlled, voluntarily terminated performance behaviour, engaged in more

progress evaluation and appeared more aware of process difficulties when evaluating their overall satisfaction..

It thus became apparent that two moderately distinct pathways were evident when data was grouped according to this variable. In Figure 3.9., these two pathways are represented as contrasting sides of the model. Impulsive, relatively automatic offenders (poor affect regulators) tended to follow the left hand side of the model, and offenders with at least moderately intact affect regulation skills tended to follow the right hand side of the model. At some phases, such as goal formation, this distinction is less obvious because the subcategories in this phase are numerous, and have been distributed across the middle of the page in order to position all the choice points at the same level. It is therefore important to take careful note of the category and subcategory labels when tracking the components of the model from start to finish, relying less on the left hand side- right hand side distinction than on choice point labels.

4. DISCUSSION

A preliminary process model of violent offending was presented in this paper. Developed utilising a grounded theory approach to data analysis, the model takes an innovative approach to the identification of discrete patterns of behaviour exhibited by a cross section of violent offenders.

The model provides a temporal account of the cognitions, behaviours and emotions exhibited throughout the offence process, and thereby begins to clarify which processes occur at which stages of the offence chain. A primary advantage of the model, therefore, is its ability to highlight choice, or decision, points along the entire temporally anchored offence process. One important implication of this feature of the model is the application of the choice point information to intervention methodology. By identifying both processes (i.e., evaluation, decision making), and content (i.e., Redress Harm goals), the model focuses intervention strategies toward those that are most likely to effectively interrupt the offender's progression through the offence chain.

A second feature of the model is that it is congruent with a wide range of theoretical propositions described in the currently available violence literature. Moreover, concepts from the motivational, social interactionist (coercion), and information processing, literature are also represented in the model. Baumeister's (1996) theory of high self esteem and aggressive behaviour, and the under-over controlled violent offenders theory (Megargee, 1966) were less clear in the present model.

In its entirety the model comprises six phases. A total of 14 choice points within 21 major categories provide the structural framework. The following section discusses the findings at each phase of the model, and evaluates these findings within the context of the currently available literature. Additionally, an overview of the clinical

implications that arise from the findings proposed by this model are discussed.

4.1. THE VIOLENT OFFENCE PROCESS MODEL

Comparisons with Available Literature

Aspects of Social Learning theory, which suggests that aggressive behaviour is learned both through the observation of this behaviour in others, and through personal experience (Bandura, 1983), were evident in both the first and last phases of the model. First, the method of *acquisition* of aggressive behaviour (Bandura, 1983) is evident in the background factors identified by the participants. Background factors are a general cluster of variables that, when interacting with proximal mood and offence related variables, described the situational context prior to a violent incident occurring. Offenders noted the presence of aggressive behaviour in role models during their childhood (i.e., primary caregivers, peers), particularly as an interpersonal conflict resolution tactic. Further, they described a tendency to utilise aggressive behaviour as a primary conflict resolution themselves, thus acquiring aggressive behaviour both through observational and experiential learning. While not all participants described caregiver use of aggressive behaviour, the majority noted that peer groups did model this type of behaviour, particularly in early adolescence.

Bandura's (1983) further assertion, that positive reinforcement functions to maintain aggressive behaviour, indeed, any behaviour, is also supported by offenders' descriptions of aggressive behaviour as an effective method of resolving interpersonal conflict. Generally, it seemed, a reduction in aggressive or other aversive behaviour, or alternatively, compliance with the offender's requirements, is usually attained through the use of violent, or more general aggressive, behaviour. This reduction in aversive behaviour, or compliance with offender requirements, serves to reinforce the offenders' appraisal of this response as an efficacious conflict resolution or need gratification strategy. Offenders describing complete offence

satisfaction in the offence satisfaction evaluation, the last evaluative link in the offence chain, also reported a high likelihood of utilising the same methods for achieving resolution of an interpersonal conflict or for acquiring something they desired, in the future. The justification put forward for this, that 'it works', illustrates Bandura's (1983) reinforcement concept well.

The influence of affective state at every phase of the model is of primary importance. An orthogonal representation of affective state was utilised by the model and allows offenders to be plotted within a two dimensional framework comprising both positive and negative affective *tone*, and flat or energised affective *intensity*. Affective state was found to be a dynamic variable, which fluctuated between positive and negative, and often also between flat and energised, dimensional extremes at various stages of the offence chain for each offender. In other words, offenders tended to oscillate between feeling positive and feeling negative at various phases of the model, and between varying degrees of intensity.

An offender's affective state in the situational context and justification phases of the model is particularly informative with regard to the subsequent choices made at decision points along the offence chain. Interestingly, a negative affective state does not appear to be a required component for commencement of offence related behaviour. Positive proximal mood appears to be equally amenable to later violent behaviour. Thus, one does not need to be stressed or angry, for example, in order to develop offence related goals, nor to subsequently act on these established goals. However, where positive mood, whether energised or flat, was identified proximal to offence goal establishment, verbal responses were more likely to occur as a response to a triggering event. Offenders experiencing a positive mood state at the time of the triggering event were more likely to attempt to settle the incident by providing the potential victim with an opportunity to back down (i.e., apologise or pay their debt). Offenders with negative proximal mood states prior to a triggering event were more likely to become aware, or actively scan the environment, for potential triggering events, and were more likely to interpret ambiguous events as threatening, or

undesirable. This observation fits with Novaco's (1989) concept of attentional cueing, a cognitive bias leading to increased attention directed to aggression related stimuli. They were also less likely to provide an opportunity to the potential victim to back down. These offenders tend to move into the situational evaluation stage as a response to a triggering event, where they consider the constraints or otherwise on a decision to proceed with an offence performance. A cost benefit analysis of consequences may be part of this evaluation for some offenders.

The relationship between affect and offence behaviour appears to be most salient at evaluation and planning stages. Offenders respond to a triggering event by comparing it with past situations in which environmental cues were similar, the comparative evaluation stage in phase II. In this stage, offenders appear to access established cognitive and behavioural scripts in order to guide their response to the current situation. For example, by comparing the current triggering event with previous, similar, events, affect and cognitions about the previous event were accessed and *applied to the current situation* Additionally, it seemed that not all aspects of the two situations needed to match for previous affect and cognitions to be considered relevant to the current situation by the offender, as long as at least one aspect of both events were congruent, past cognitive, affective and behavioural scripts were used to make decisions about the current situation. This observation supports Novaco's (1989) perceptual matching concept, which proposes that experiences are compared with similar, historical, events, and has also been observed by Huesmann and Eron (1988) when they propose, in their social interactionist approach to aggression, that aggressive behaviour is reliant on cognitive scripts.

It seems that not only is this evaluation pertinent to directing goal formation, it may also influence affective state. Positive proximal mood can be altered as a result of this cognitive process, perhaps because the accessed script directs not only process behaviour, but also leads to an attempt to promote affective congruence between the historical and current situation. In other words, it is possible that when the event occurs, the offender evaluates this event within the context of previous similar

experiences and follows this now activated programme of response behaviour while concurrently, the act of remembering the past event and the affective state associated with it, highlights the incongruence, at least for *positive proximal mood* offenders, between a negative affective state experienced during the historical event and the positive mood experienced in the present, pre-offence, situation. It is possible that the accessing of established scripts initiates awareness of the affect experienced during the previous situation, and this historical affect may be incongruent with the positive affect being experienced 'in the moment'. This incongruence may lead to the offender adjusting his affective state to achieve coherence with affect experienced during the historical situation. This adjustment is most likely to be in a negative direction. For those offenders experiencing *negative proximal mood,* the above process may enhance the intensity of negative affect. Berkowitz's (1994) network of aggressive constructs theory may explain this occurrence. He suggests that emotions are differentiated into categories, with each emotion comprising of cognitive, affective and behavioural sub categories. The subcategories are seen to be interconnected, such that when one of the related subcategories is activated, for example aggressive cognitions, the entire network associated with this particular construct is activated. The connection between past and current affect, as a result of a cognitive or behavioural experience, that was evident in the present model may be a product of such a network activation.

The model also supports Huesmann and Eron's (1988) suggestions that aggressive behaviour is primarily a social problem-solving mechanism. The triggering event and offence goal labels in the Justification and Preparation phases of the model show that social problem solving is, at least in some instances, an identified goal of aggressive behaviour. For example, *Redress Harm* goals of Punishment and Image Restoration both indicate an underlying problem solving element. Some *Meet Need* goals, such as self preservation, may also be conceptualised as fitting this description.

One of the Meet Need goal subcategories identified by offenders was that of self-

advancement. Two self-advancement goals identified by participants were money (i.e., as in the case of aggravated robbers), or an 'adrenaline rush'. The latter was not always explicitly established as an offence goal, but was instead described as a product of the offence performance behaviour, and was evaluated to be desirable. In other words, while some offenders actively identified the experience of an 'adrenaline rush' as at least partial motivation for their offending behaviour, most formed other offence goals and in the process of engaging in offence behaviour, found an adrenaline rush a satisfactory, even desirable, by product.

It is possible that the evaluation of a secondary, or unexpected, reinforcer as desirable, may lead to this reinforcer being incorporated as a primary goal in future situations.

The Motivational Approach to aggression suggested by Tedeschi and Callahan (1995) may provide some explanation for this observation. They identify aggression as possibly being an addictive behaviour, with sensation seeking formulated as one motivational aspect of such behaviour. Further more, their contention that aggressive behaviour may be instigated in order to eliminate boredom also fits well with the model proposed in the present paper, which identified proneness to boredom, as a background variable for some offenders.

With regard to phases in which planning was evidenced, such as Goal Formation and Preparation, affect was found to be particularly influential. Those offenders experiencing intense affective states tended to plan less, to plan less effectively, and to activate their minimal plans more immediately, than offenders experiencing less intense affective states. It is possible that a state of high arousal precludes effective planning by decreasing available cognitive resources. The observation that energised affective states reduced planning abilities provides support for Serin and Kuriychuk (1994) contention that arousal states make assimilation of information regarding alternative behavioural responses too effortful, resulting in a lack of reflection and

evaluation. Effortful planning (i.e., planning at the maximal end of the planning continuum in the model), and evaluation of progress and process throughout the phases of the model, was more often described by offenders experiencing a flat affective state, thus they were less aroused and possibly more able to both plan and evaluate effectively as a result.

Serin and Kuriychuk's (1994) suggestions of the role of disinhibition in violent offending, where impulsivity is seen as the direct result of the failure to reflect or as a failure or deficit in the ability to assimilate information, can be applied to the controlled-uncontrolled continuum presented in the Offence Performance phase of the model. Uncontrolled offence performance behaviour tended to be more often emitted by highly aroused, usually negatively, (i.e., enraged), offenders. When tracked through the model, it becomes clear that these offenders are likely to fail to plan, and fail to reflect on, their behaviour. They are also less likely to modify their behaviour when they do reflect on it. This appears to indicate a social competency deficit, and supports the concept of impulsivity as proposed by Serin and Kuriychuk (19940.

In general, then, the model provides support for a number of concepts and theories related to aggressive behaviour and violent offending described in the currently available literature. Two approaches, Baumeister's (1996) theory of high self esteem, and Megargee's (1966) theory of over and under controlled offenders were not wholly supported by the model, for different reasons.

The high self esteem theory proposes that a threat to self-perception, in persons with a highly favourable perception of self, is causative in aggressive behaviour. The offenders in the present research did not tend to identify a threat to self perception as a dominant goal. Treat to Image was identified as an offence goal, but this was generally a threat to *other's* perceptions of the offender, for example, where non payment of a drug debt was perceived to be giving a wider population the impression that the offender was 'easy to rip off', and a restoration of image goal was

established to counter-act this perceived image threatening effect of the triggering event (non payment).

Megargee's (1966) hypothesis of over and under controlled violent offenders is difficult to evaluate in light of the present model, given that none of the offenders in the present study could properly be considered to have committed relatively 'minor' violent offences. A comparison between minor and more serious or extreme offences forms the basis for Megargee's contention, and the model does not, in its present form, provide information regarding the population of violent offenders that commit minor offences, such as common assault. Based on the two offenders in the sample that may be perceived to have committed an 'extreme' crime of violence, some possible support for Megargee's proposal that such offenders may be either over *or* undercontrolled could be observed. in that one of these offenders described a history of violent behaviour, both minor and extreme, while the other had no previous convictions for violent offences prior to being imprisoned for his index manslaughter charge.

Offence Pathways

It became evident during the model's development that one model of violent behaviour was able to effectively integrate both the ethnic and all three of the offence type groups. In other words, it was not necessary to develop individual models to account for offence processes exhibited by these different populations.

Tracking the comparison groups through the model in order identify whether observably different pathways were evident in the processes of offending for these groups revealed no discernible differences in offence pathways. While several differences between the groups were noted, these did not prove robust enough in terms of describing sequentially different pathways through the model.

One observation of note is that GBH/assault and murder/manslaughter offenders tended to be more impulsive, and less well organised than aggravated robbery

participants. This may have been a function of their concurrent tendency to be more likely to experience high levels of affective intensity, both negative and positive, and of their higher likelihood experience disinhibition.

While offence type and ethnicity did not reveal robust differences in offence process, the model indicates that affective regulation is one potential differentiating variable. As has been described, affective state appears to exude considerable influence on the offence process. A general progression through the model was observed that related to the offender's ability to effectively regulate, or manage, his affective tone and intensity. Generally, intense affect states led to little, or poor planning, a lack of reflection and evaluation of behaviour and offence chain progress, more likelihood of uncontrolled offence performance behaviour and less likelihood of behavioural adjustment when evaluation indicated that adjustment was required or beneficial.

The observation that affect regulation, but not offence type or ethnicity, may effectively identify differences between offenders indicates that differences in process are more likely to be a function of individual skills and abilities, and therefore dynamic and changeable, than of static, criminologically or culturally based variables. Affect regulation as a differentiating factor in offence process has been identified in the sex offending literature (e.g., Ward & Hudson, 1998). This literature indicates that affect regulation is a useful construct from which to explore offence process pathways for sex offenders, and thus provides support for further exploration of these initial observations in the violent offenders population

Theoretical and Clinical Applications

A particular strength of process models, and indeed the rationale for their use in psychological research, relates to their ability to inform intervention strategies.
Process models highlight identifiable choice points within the offence process that may potentially respond well to interruption. In this way process models inform treatment intervention. They may also contribute to refinement of assessment

techniques for the target population by virtue of their construction based on offender generated data because the decision points that emerge from analysis of the data are salient to the offender population. Basing assessment and treatment strategies on these choice points makes them more relevant to the offender and this may result in increased assessment and treatment efficacy.

With regard to the model of violent offending presented in this paper, several points in the offence process may prove to be amenable to focused intervention However, in highlighting these issues, the reader must bear in mind the preliminary nature of this process model, and the need for further clarification of its validity, as discussed in the following sections on limitations of the model and the future directions for research it has highlighted.

At this point in the models formulation, several possibilities with regard to targeted intervention have emerged. First, by constructing an offence chain for individual offenders using the model , may prove useful in promoting his or her understanding of the processes involved in his or her own offending, and may clarify decision, and thus potential *exit*, points. Interventions aimed at increasing the offenders' ability to recognise situations in which offending is likely to occur (high risk situations) based on helping them clarify their progression through the model's phases and identifying the choices they tend to make at each decision point, may prove a useful relapse prevention strategy. Skills based interventions that provides offenders with resources that enable him or her to exert control over their own behaviour, once their own offence process pathways through the model have been clarified, are consequentially indicated. A primary intervention focus appears at this stage of the model's development to point to affect regulation skills. By clarifying to offenders the extent of influence their affect has over their offence process, and subsequently teaching offenders how to recognise, label and manage their affect, may have potential utility with regard to relapse prevention. Additional skills training may include social and problem solving skills training, and conflict resolution skills training.

A second advantage of the process models is their ability to provide integrate existing theoretical principles within a temporally anchored descriptive stage-framework. The Level I and II theories that attempt to explain etiological and causative aspects of offending are able to be applied to Level III process models in order to ascertain their relevance. Without a documented description of an offence process to which causative and etiological theories may be applied, the utility of Level I and II theories are restricted to remaining hypothetical suggestions.

Additionally, process models highlight areas of requiring theoretical advancement. The model of violent offending presented in this paper has raised several issues that are worthy of further theoretical development and these are discussed in the section on future research directions.

4.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

As alluded to in previous sections of this paper, there are several issues that must be taken into consideration when evaluating the efficacy and utility of the model presented in this paper.

Sample Size

While Rennie et al (1988) suggest that approximately five to ten protocols are usually sufficient to achieve saturation of categories so that a model may be constructed, they also highlight the importance of cross validating research to test the resultant model against further sources of data from the target population. If no further categories are revealed following cross validation, the model can be said to have validity.

The present model was based on the protocols of twelve violent offenders. While this sample was large enough to generate categories and build an initial model, further testing of this model is necessary to clarify the degree of representation it has achieved with regard to the wider violent offender population. Relatedly, the finding

that offence type and ethnicity based comparison groups did not differ in any substantial way with regard to their progression through the model is also potentially a function of small sample size, and further testing of protocols based on these distinctions is warranted.

Verbal Self Report

It is possible that a social desirability process may have influenced the content of the interviews. Offenders may have provided information in accordance with a desire to present themselves in the best possible light, and data collected may therefore not necessarily be accurate. Cognitive distortions may also have had some influence on data accuracy. Issues related to the ability of the participants to 'know the truth', which refers to a suggestion that participants may not be aware of their internal processes, have been raised with regard to grounded theory's reliance on verbal self report. Rennie et al (1988) have noted that while it is impossible to know the truth value of individual verbal reports, the use of the constant comparative method that was used in the development of the present model; and which demonstrates that different individuals say the same thing, increases the credibility of individual accounts. Additionally, recall of events may have been distorted as a result of memory processes, such as natural forgetfulness and may have meant that descriptions provided by the participants were skewed, or incomplete representation of their offence process.

Generalisability

Lastly, the model is based on offence processes of male incarcerated offenders with convictions for GBH/assault, aggravated robbery, murder and manslaughter. Issues of representativeness with regard to female violent offenders; non-convicted and non-incarcerated offenders; and violent offenders convicted for other types of violent crimes limit the generalisability of this model in its present form. It however, the intention of a grounded theory driven model to create a new theory or, as in the case of this model, illustrate a process, that is tied to the reality of the individuals it represents. Thus, verification beyond that of the model's accurate representation of

the population used for the process illustration (i.e., GBH/assault, aggravated robbery and murder/manslaughter offenders) is deliberately left to further studies and is not a goal or purpose relevant to the initial study.

4.3. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The model of violent offending presented in this paper is a preliminary attempt at identification and clarification of the process involved in violent offending. It is intended as a basis for further systematic investigation into the process and content of the violent behaviour. While research into intervention methodology based on the categories, choice points and role of affective regulation identified in this model would potentially further clarify its clinical and theoretical utility, the preliminary nature of the model indicates that of primary importance is further validation of the model's components both with the population used for the model's construction (i.e, cross validation studies), and with other violent offenders.

Future research should therefore initially aim to test the model against further data protocols using the three offence types on which the present model is based, in order to determine the extent of its saturation and representativeness.. Research aimed at verification of the model's applicability to other groups, such as female and non-incarcerated violent offenders, is also identified as a direction for future study.

It is expected that research with a larger sample would potentially enrich the categories, concepts and constructs on which the model is based. This may in turn provide a more comprehensive and more complete account of the violent offence process, and may further clarify potentially useful focal points for intervention strategies. Clarification of the role of affect in the offence process is needed, and the effect of variables such as social competency, emotional labelling and conflict resolution need to be more clearly defined. Additionally it would be useful to further

develop the planning and evaluative processes identified in the present model in order to clarify their influence and potential utility as a focus for intervention.

The use of psychometric assessment, perhaps using measures to further clarify the presence and role of empathy deficits, anxiety, and anger, may also prove useful in further extending this model of violent offending.

4.4. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to develop a descriptive model of the process of violent offending. The rationale for a process model approach to this research was based on the utility of this kind of model to inform both intervention and theory practices. The resultant model of violent offence processes describes the behaviours, cognitions and affective states at pre-offence, offence and post-offence stages of the offence chain. Six phases represent this offence process in the model: *Situational Context; Justification; Goal Formation; Preparation; Offence Performance;* and *Post Offence Performance.* Affect regulation emerged as a potentially useful construct in differentiating pathways through the model's phases, and this concept requires further validation. The model provides a useful, preliminary representation of the processes involved in violent offending, and highlights potential decision points that should be explored for their utility in informing treatment with this population.

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APPENDIX ONE

THE PROCESS OF VIOLENT OFFENDING STUDY

Information Sheet

You are invited to participate in a research project that aims to identify and describe the process involved in offending for offenders of violent crimes. It is hoped that this research will provide a basis for other researchers to build on so that we may better understand the process of violent offending. Importantly, a description of violent offending may aid in identifying important areas that should be included in treatment and intervention, and in prevention strategies.

Consent to take part in the study will mean a commitment of approximately 90-120 minutes of your time in total, which will be spent in one audiotaped interview. In this interview you will be asked to describe either the offence for which you are now in prison, or a typical offence. You will be asked to describe this offence in terms of the behaviours, the thoughts, and the emotions you experienced, both immediately before, during and immediately after the offence occurred.

The project will involve a file review and use of any relevant corroborative or collateral information. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary, and you are also free to withdraw your participation at any time. The information that you provide, and that is obtained from file reviews, will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. It will not be released to any other persons without your permission.

By consenting to take part in the project you do, however, consent to publication of the results of the study, with the understanding that your anonymity will be preserved and you will not be identified in any way.

An important point to note is that should you find yourself emotionally distressed by your participation in this study, the researcher will ensure that this is dealt with, at your request, either by her, or for more long term issues, that it is bought to the attention of your unit manager and referred on to a Psychological Service psychologist so that you may have opportunity to address these issues.

APPENDIX TWO

THE PROCESS OF VIOLENT OFFENDING STUDY

CONSENT FORM

I _____agree to take part in the Process of Offending for Violent Offenders study. The purpose of the study has been explained to me and I am aware that my involvement is to aid the development of a descriptive model of the processes involved in violent crimes.

I understand that I am a volunteer and can withdraw from the study at any time. The information I provide, and that is obtained from file reviews and other sources, will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. It will not be released to any other person without my permission.

I understand that my participation, or my refusal to participate, in this study has no effect on any issues related to my jail sentence, and I consent to results of this research being published, with the understanding that my anonymity will be preserved.

Signed_____ Date_____

Witnessed By_____ Date_____

APPENDIX THREE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Criminal History/Adult Antisocial Behaviour

2. Have you had any prior adult convictions? _____ How many?_____
3. Do you have three or many present offences? _____
4. Were you ever arrested under the age of 16? _____
5. Were you ever incarcerated upon conviction as an adult? _____
6. Have you had any history of escape or attempted escape from a youth or adult correctional facility, including institutional and residential facilities? Include breach of parole or probation or failure to appear. Get details.
7. Were you ever punished for institutional misconduct?_____
8. For what infarction?_____
9. Were charges ever laid or your probation or parole suspended during prior community supervision? _____. Describe:
10. Do you have an official record of assault or violence?_____. Specify
11. What are you charged with right now?
12. For each specific offence: (a)What happened? (b)What did you do? (c)What do the police say you did? (d)Was the offence spontaneous or planned? (e)Were you the only person involved, or were you with others? (f)Did you know the victim? (g)Were you drunk or stoned at the time of the offence? (h)How did you get arrested?
13. (a) How long is your sentence? (b) Do you feel it is a fair one? (c) What kind of a job did your lawyer do?
14. What other types of offences have you been arrested for as an adult? (Describe most serious)
15. Why did you commit your most recent offence?
16. Why did you start crime?
17. Do you think your current sentence will have any effect on your life? Positive/Negative:
18. What could you have done to avoid committing your most recent offence?
19. Have you ever tried to stop committing crime? How?
20. Would you like to lead a life without crime?
21. What would help to keep you out of crime?
22. How do you feel about the crimes you've committed? Regret any offences? Why/Why not?
23. What effect has your crimes has on the victims?
24. How do you feel about the effect on the victims?
25. Have you had any contact with victim?
26. Crimes usually impulsive or planned?
27. How do you feel when doing a crime? Positive/Negative?
28. Have you ever committed a crime and not got caught? Get details (age, freq., type)
29. Aliases? Why?

Child Antisocial Behaviour

30. When you were young did you do anything outside of school, like vandalising, setting fires, hurting animals for fun, stealing? Get details:
31. Did you get caught? (b) How were you punished? (c) How did it affect you?

32. Did you ever get into trouble with the police as a child (i.e. under 12). Get details:
33. Were you ever arrested as a juvenile? (i.e. under 17). Get details:
34. How old were you when you first started doing crime? What kinds of things? Not get caught?

Education

35. Have you completed less than fifth form?
36. Have you completed less than seventh form?
37. (only ask if not apparent from above) Have you ever been suspended or expelled at least once? How often? For what? Age?
38. How often did you skip school? Why? At what age?
39. What kind of marks did you get at school? Were you kept behind a level? Why? Age?
40. How did you like school? General info: likes/dislikes, boring, problem paying attention, how would teachers have described you?
41. How did you get along with the other kids? Did you have close friends?
42. How was your behaviour at school? (get into trouble, disturbing class, drunk/stoned, cheating, stealing) How often? Age?
43. Did you get into physical fights? How often? Age? Who started them? Did you ever hurt anyone badly?
44. Did you finish high school? When did you quit? Why?
45. What did you do after leaving school?
46. Have you done any upgrading or taken any other courses? Describe

Employment/Work History

47. What kind of work have you done in the past?
48. How many different jobs do you think you have had?
49. What was your longest job? Shortest?
50. With reference to longest held or most recent job: what did you do? How long for? When? Enjoyed? Good money? Why did you leave? Good at following orders?
51. Were you employed before you came to prison?
52. If yes,
53. How did you do in your job? (hard worker, boss' opinion, absences, trouble, A/D, how did you like your boss)
54. (b)Did you get along with your co-workers? (spend time outside work hours?)
55. 46.Have you ever been fired? Or leave a job without having another lined up? Why? Age? How often?
56. Have you ever been unemployed? How often? Age? How long? How did you support yourself? Were you looking for work? How seriously?

Career Goals

57. Is there any job you would like to do? What training is needed? Have you planned this?
58. What are your plans after release? Living? Support?
59. What problems might there be in achieving these goals?

Finances

60. Have you ever had a bank loan or personal loan? How many? Age? Pay back? Why/why not?
61. Do you pay child support? Details

Health

62. Do you have any serious medical problems? Describe.
63. Have you ever seen a psychologist or psychiatrist? Details
64. 54.As a child were you ever diagnosed as hyperactive? Details
65. Were you ever on medications for your nerves? Details?
66. Do you have any concerns about your emotional stability?
67. Are you ever bothered by uncontrollable urges or ideas?
68. Have you ever tried to commit suicide? Details

Accommodation

69. How did you like where you were living before you came to prison?
70. Have you had three or more address changes in the year or more before you went to prison?
71. What kind of neighbourhood did you live in?

Leisure/Recreation

72. What kinds of clubs/organsiation have you belonged to?
73. How do you spend your free time? When out?

Companions

74. Do you have lots of friends? (any close ones?)
75. Would you rather do things with your friends or on your own?
76. Did you know anyone who was involved in crime before you came to prison?
77. Have any of your friends been in trouble with the law?
78. Do you know anyone who is not involved in crime?
79.

Family Life

80. Were you raised by your natural parents? Details
81. Answer following with reference to primary home setting (parental or surrogate - may have both, get details for each):
82. What was your home life like? Relationship with parents - describe
83. Relationship of parents - fighting, affectionate, separation - effect on you
84. Siblings - get along with them?
85. Strict household? Lots of rules, break the rules? Age? How often? Why? Punishment?
86. Did anyone in your household get in trouble with the law? Details
87. Did anyone in your household have serious mental or physical problems?
88. Did anyone in your household have D/A problems?
89. Were you ever abused - physically, sexually, emotionally? Details
90. How were old were you when you left home?
91. Have you ever 'hit the road' and travelled without real plans? Details
92. What is your relationship with your family like now? Parents, siblings, other relatives?

Sex/Relationships

93. How many live-in relationships have you had? (hetero and homosexual)
94. If lots, why so many?
95. If denies live-in: have you ever had a serious girl-friend or boy-friend?

96. Have you ever been deeply in love? Details
97. How old were you when you had your first sexual relationship? Stable or casual?
98. How many different sexual partners have you had? How many were one night stands?
99. Have you ever been seeing two people at the same time? Details
100. Have you ever been unfaithful to your partner? Details
101. Do you have any children or step children? Details.
102. 82. For 3 of longest/most recent live-in relationships:
103. (a)How long did relationship last? How old were you when it started?
104. Describe partner. What did you like about them? Love or just physical?
105. Stable? Argue much? Physical fights
106. Why did it end? How long did it take you to get over it?

Alcohol/Drug

107. Do you use alcohol or drugs (prior to prison)? (type, age of onset)
108. Have you ever considered yourself to have an alcohol/drug problem? (how much, how often, currently?)
109. Did alcohol/drugs ever interfere with your life, did you ever get into trouble when stoned or drunk?
110. Do you think that your use of D/A has contributed to any of your offenses? (e.g. being stoned, theft for money to buy drugs, trafficking drugs)
111. Has your family ever complained about your use of D/A?
112. Has their use ever caused problems at work/school?
113. Has your D/A use ever led to any medical problems?
114. Have you ever drunk or used drugs to get rid of a hangover?/ what about using either first thing in Once you start drinking how easy is it for you to stop?
115. Ever experienced blackouts?
116. Ever been to a detox centre?
117. Why do you use drugs/alcohol (stimulation, escape, relaxation)?

General Attitudes

118. Have you ever done anything (other then crime) that made you feel guilty or that you were sorry about? (details)
119. If the price was right, is there anything you would not do?
120. When you work at some thing for a long time, do you get bored easy?
121. Do you lie a lot?
122. Do you think that people are easy to "con" (if yes, give examples)
123. Have you ever been told that you have a bad temper (if yes, what types of things make you angry? What do you do when your angry?)
124. How do you feel about yourself? (self-esteem 1-10)
125. Has anyone close to you ever died? How did it effect you? (if no, what about been seriously ill?
126. What is the most depressed that you have ever been?
127. What is the happiest that you've ever been?
128. Are you satisfied with your life so far?

APPENDIX FOUR

OFFENDER CHOICE POINT BEHAVIOUR RECORD

Ethnicity: Age: Substances Involved: Offence Type: Code:

Phase 1. Situational Context
Proximal Mood =
(Positive/Negative)

Phase 2. Justification
Trigger Label =
(Unmet Expectation/Threat to Image/Threat of Injury or Death/Unmet Need/Order or Request)
Response to Triggering Event =
(Verbal/Situational Evaluation)
Affect =

Phase 3. Goal Formation
Goal Label =
(RH = Punishment/Restore Image or MN = Self Preservation/Self-Advancement or Demonstrate Loyalty)
Victim/Target Present/Absent =
Distal Planning Type =
(Organisational/Performance)
Degree of Planning =
(Minimal/Maximal)
Temporal Planning =
(Immediate/Delayed)
Activation of Plan =
(Immediate/Delayed)
Affect =

Phase 4. Preparation
Proximal Planning =
(Develop Proximal Plan/Refine and Activate Distal Plan/Activate Distal Plan w/o Refinement)
Degree of Planning if Develop Proximal =
(None/Minimal)
Affect =

Phase 5. Offence Performance
Performance Behaviour Type =
(Controlled/Uncontrolled)
Progress Evaluation =
(None/Dissatisfaction/Dissatisfaction w/o Adjustment/Satisfaction)
Performance Termination =
(Enforced/Voluntary)
Affect =

Phase 6. Post-Performance
Performance Evaluation =
(None/Goal-Outcome Incongruence/Goal-Outcome Congruence)
Post-Performance Behaviour =
Develop Proximal Plan/Refine + Activate Distal Plan/Activate Distal Plan/Activate Distal + Develop Proximal)
Degree of Planning if Develop Proximal =
(Minimal/Maximal)
Affect to this point =
Goal Achievement Evaluation Type =
(Unsuccessful/Successful)
Offence Satisfaction Evaluation Type =
(Complete Dissatisfaction/Complete Satisfaction/Dissat. with Outcome/Dissat. with Outcome + Process)
Probability of Re-Offending Type =
(Low/High)
Affect =

APPENDIX FIVE

BACKGROUND AND OFFENCE RELATED FACTOR CLUSTERS

Developmental Adversity

Parental Loss _____
Physical Abuse _____
Sexual Abuse _____
Emotional Abuse _____
Inconsistent Discipline _____
Poor Attachment to PC _____
Chaotic Home-Life _____
Economic Hardship _____

Attachment Style

Dismissive _____
Fearful _____
Pre-occupied _____
Secure _____

Temperament/Personality

ADD/ADHD _____
Perfectionism _____
Antisocial _____
Impulsive _____
Passive/Aggressive _____
Narcissistic _____
Paranoid _____
Avoidant _____
Aggressive/Sadistic _____
Anxious _____
Dependent _____
Depressive _____
Overly Sensitive (To Criticism) _____

Educational/Occupational

Educational Failure _____
Picked on at School _____
Attention Problems _____
Concentration Problems _____
Proneness to Boredom _____
Truancy _____
Expulsion/Suspension _____
Courses Attended Since School _____
Lack of Full-time Employment _____
Tendency to Quit Employment _____
Fired from Employment _____

Social Competency

Skill Deficits:
- Communication _____
- Problem-Solving _____
- Assertiveness _____

Tendency to be a Loner _____
Unstable Sense of Self _____
Negative Sense of Self _____
Callous Attitude _____
Rigid Attitude _____

Interpersonal Style

Conflict Resolution Skills Deficits _____
Intimacy Issues (Fear of Intimacy) _____
Irresponsible Attitude To Others _____
Negative Interpersonal Exp. _____
Empathy Deficits _____

Substance Use/Misuse

Use of Alcohol _____
Use of Cannabis _____
Use of Other Drugs _____
Dependence on Alcohol _____
Dependence on Cannabis _____
Dependence on Other Drugs _____
Medical Complications _____
Black-out's Related to Alcohol _____
Used to Relax _____
Used to Escape _____
Use to Regulate Affect _____
Parental Alcohol Use _____
Parental Cannabis Use _____
Parental Other Drug Use _____

Substance Use Related to Offending

Alcohol as a Precursor _____
Cannabis as a Precursor _____

Other Drugs as a Precursor _____
Inc. Aggression with Alcohol _____

Offending History

Previous Similar Incidents _____
Previous Similar Triggers _____
Previous Prison term _____
Young Age at Commencement _____
Financial Benefits to Offending _____
Esteem Goal to Offending _____
Regulatory Goal to Offending _____
Offend to Support Self/Family _____
Offend to Support Substance Use _____
'Buzz' as Goal to Offending _____
Gang as Reason for Offending _____
Peer Pressure to Begin Offending _____

Current Offence Related Attitudes

Satisfaction with Criminal Lifestyle
Yes _____
No _____
Refusal To Change _____
Inability to Change _____
Pointless To Change _____
Ability to Change _____
Rage-Related Black-Out's _____
No Remorse for Offending _____
Short-Lived Remorse Re Offending _____
Remorse Reported for Offending _____

APPENDIX SIX

LETTER OF ETHICS APPROVAL

University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800
Christchurch
New Zealand
Telephone: 03-366 7001
Fax: 03-364 2999

25 September 1998

Brenda Dolieslager
C/o Dr Steve Hudson
Department of Psychology
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Brenda

The Human Ethics Committee advises that your research proposal **"Violent Offenders: A descriptive model of the process of offending."** has been considered and approved.

Yours sincerely

Isobel Phillips
Secretary